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Faith, Art and Culture

There are, at the present time, in various parts of the world, encouraging signs of the awakening of Christian students to artistic life. Experiments are being made, more or less successfully, in the dramatic sphere ; these may take the form of attempts by student Christian groups to produce plays of high intellectual and artistic quality, or of ventures in the field of evangelism through drama, or even in the more difficult and almost unknown area of worship through drama. In the whole realm of worship there is evidence of rapid change and renewal. One of its most obvious manifestations is the interesting effort which is being made to renew church architecture and to profit from the rich development of architecture in recent decades ; for the first time in the modern era church architecture is not dependent only on respect for well-established secular tradition, but is growing out of the experience, the thinking, the life of modern artists who, while trying to be faithful to the essential character of Christian faith and community, are also attempting to express something of the modern life of man. Many Student Christian Movements are making attempts to improve the artistic quality of their publications, if only in their choice of illustrations. Last summer the Federation organized in Holland a "Chalet", at which for three weeks students studied together the relationship between faith and drama.

Why are there so many signs of change and renewal in the Church and in the Federation, precisely at the point of artistic life? It is true that the Federation and Student Christian Movements are bound to be concerned about art, since it is part of culture, and the development of culture is, by definition, the purpose, or at least one of the purposes, of the university — which is our field of obedience. However, until recently, most Student Christian Movements seemed to be apathetic in matters pertaining to the arts. I am not referring so much to the profound ignorance of art which has always existed among the majority of students, but rather to the lack of interest in what we may call the living art of our day among even the intellectual *élite* of our Student Christian Movements. Christian students, along with other Christians, are still, with very few exceptions, devoted to outmoded artistic forms. Christian hymnology, church architecture, the kind of theatrical performances which we see in the Church or S.C.M. have been little influenced by what is called modern art. With a few brilliant exceptions, the evolution of forms of artistic expression in the Church seems to have stopped two or three centuries ago. Perhaps the most painful situation is to be found in the so-called mission fields, where, as articles in this issue of *The Student World* point out, the Church makes use not only of outmoded forms of art, but also of foreign artistic forms imported from the West into Asia and Africa.

Lack of a spirit of adventure

What are the reasons for this apathy of the Church, of most Christians, towards the arts? Why is it that the Church, which at other periods in its history had so many great artists — I am thinking, for instance, of the eighteenth-century musicians — has so few of them today? I think we must recognize here again one of the temptations which we as Christians face today — a temptation often emphasized in this magazine — that of the ghetto, the temptation to separate ourselves from the world and to retire into a careful, comfortable, but deadly isolation. This isolation may take the obvious form of social segregation; it may also appear as traditionalism in cultural and

artistic forms. It may very well be that, if Christians do not dare to take their part in the modern evolution of art, if the Church produces relatively few modern artists, it is the result of a lack of a spirit of adventure. It comes from a fear of using new forms of expression, new patterns of beauty and truth, with which we have no previous acquaintance. We seem to be so concerned about the purity of our faith and our obedience, and at the same time so afraid of our own human frailty, that we dare not go forward on untrodden paths. Modern Christendom, confronted by the living art which is emerging so rapidly around it, and recognizing in it something in whose development the Church has had relatively little part, seems to refuse to see in it anything but one of the many manifestations of an unknown and, therefore, hostile world, a world in which God has no place because in it the Church does not feel at home. The Church seems to be afraid of the compelling voice of the unknown world which is speaking to mankind through modern art.

Lack of a satisfactory theology of art

I think, however, that this fear, this lack of a spirit of adventure, this traditionalism, do not fully explain the present apathy towards art in Christian circles. A more profound explanation seems to lie in our inability to produce a really satisfactory theology of art. In the Federation and the S.C.M.s, we have been able, in recent years, to recognize and to speak clearly about our responsibility in political life and in the intellectual spheres of culture — philosophy, science, history — but we have said little or nothing about art which is really relevant. Of course the task is harder in relation to the arts than to the other elements of culture. Art was for so long considered to be secondary to other and nobler forms of thought that little thinking was done about it. But there seems to me to be a more serious difficulty. I doubt that we have ever spoken with true relevance about culture as a whole, including not only art, but also the more intellectual disciplines. I do not think we have yet defined a positive Christian approach to culture. We feel quite capable of criticizing and condemning the

various non-Christian approaches to culture and the cultural achievements of the world. We are able to give a degree of ethical guidance to men of culture, to university teachers and students. But I do not think we have as yet defined satisfactorily the significance of culture in the perspective of Jesus Christ's love and redemption. As has often been said, we seem to be, in cultural matters, more theistic than Christocentric. We can, of course, deal more easily with such aspects of culture as philosophy or the sciences. They somehow belong to the ethical and doctrinal dimension with which theology is traditionally congenial. We can easily imagine how these intellectual disciplines are either to be condemned because they directly contradict the essentials of Christian faith, or approved and practised because they support our faith; philosophy and science appear to be important subjects for theological judgment because they seem capable of acting upon Christian faithfulness and obedience. On the contrary, the arts seem more wanton, gratuitous, unnecessary.

Lack of aesthetic appreciation

We are puzzled by art, perhaps because of our inborn puritan tendencies, our conviction that only those pursuits are justifiable which bear immediate and visible fruits. We still live more or less by an implicit rule of Christian effectiveness. We confuse what is right in God's sight with what we as humans, even as Christians, judge to be spiritually or morally effective. We have learned too well the fourth commandment: we even go beyond it. We are concerned that man should do all his work, but we misunderstand the real meaning of God's Sabbath, of God's rest, of the joy of God before His good creation. We have no understanding of the place of aesthetic satisfaction before either God's creation or man's achievement in art. We would reduce Christian life to painful, strained duty, to labour. Most Christians, even Christian students, even those students who greatly enjoy the cinema, the theatre, or a concert, too often have an uneasy conscience, even if they are not fully conscious of it, when they take time for these forms of artistic relaxation and for the work which is implied in real artistic

activity. We seem to feel that we are permitted to do only those things which are strictly part of our obedience, and not also to enjoy what God has given us through His creation and through the works of our fellow men, to discover in them the beauty of our Creator and the humanity of our fellows. In the same way, in the life of the Church, the arts have been accepted only when they have seemed to serve its immediate purposes. Art is to be tolerated, is redeemed, only when it is a direct form of worship. We seem to deny to both the artistic creator and the artistic public the right to express their joy in God's work, the right to try through art to understand in a new way what God has given His creatures.

The Christian responsibility

But, as I said in the beginning, the situation is not wholly discouraging, for there are many signs of renewal. It seems to me that the situation at the present time is fundamentally favourable, in the sense that Christians and the Church are becoming aware of the dimensions of their responsibility in art. I think this responsibility, this task, has three aspects. In the first place, Christians should make an effort really to share in what is going on around them in the field of art — to understand modern art and, through it, modern man who is expressing himself in this way. This effort to participate is nothing more than the recognition that as Christians we share in the humanity, in the needs, in the tragic situation and suffering of mankind, that as Christians we remain men. When modern art expresses so well, so pathetically, the human condition of man without God, it is particularly important for Christians to participate in this confession of misery.

The second aspect of the Christian task with regard to art should be to learn through it something about God. This is a dangerous statement. But, it seems to me, that just as we have discovered in recent years that the study of the great political and social forces of our day, the struggle with them or against them, has been and can always be an occasion for learning something about God's will and judgment upon us, so also modern art provides us with an occasion for learning. This is

most obvious, of course, in the case of artistic expression which springs from the Christian faith. The Church must learn anew that the Gospel is not only preached from the pulpit, that in some cases painting and music can also have a share, and may even say things which we fail to communicate through words, that all arts have their part to play together with the spoken word.

But another question has to be raised. Must we not be ready to learn from non-Christian artists? Through the artistic manifestations of modern paganism, of modern unbelief, should we not learn something about our own unbelief, something of man's search for God and of the ever-loving presence of God who, even when hidden, remains with the men of His choice? Should we not learn to recognize, even in the most godless forms of modern art, God's judgment upon His Church and upon each of us?

In the third place, and above all, I think our task as Christians should be to consider art as a form of communication, and indeed this seems to be one of the points on which the Church's attention is focused at the present time. Of course it is important not to confuse communication and propaganda. There is nothing more destructive of art and of communication itself than the low, almost cynical Christian publicity in which we sometimes indulge, with the ridiculous assumption that by such means we can fulfil our evangelistic responsibility. But as a means of communication art has something else to offer. Art can be, and very often is, the broad, profound and true human language through which we can bring to others something of our deepest convictions and feelings about ourselves, about the world in which we live, about our own destiny. It is a language which men have always used to express to one another their sufferings and their expectations. It is one of the ways they have discovered to break the isolation in which each of them finds himself imprisoned. It is indispensable that Christians should participate in this constant communication which art represents. Why are there so few contemporary Christian artists? As I have said, perhaps it is because we in the Church have become afraid of the world, and therefore of any communication with it. We prefer not to communicate with anyone

outside our own small circle, and it is not surprising that in these circumstances art loses its significance, loses its value, loses its life.

But we should remember that art not only offers us a language for human communication, but may also become a wonderful power for evangelism. This will perhaps be true only in so far as we try to be genuine, faithful, honest artists, and do not prostitute art for some other end, however exalted and holy it may be. But the Christian artist who tries to put into his works the essentials of his faith, as well as of his humanity, may be given the privilege of great artistic achievement, and also the privilege enjoyed, for instance, by the sculptors and architects of the Middle Ages, of being among the most powerful witnesses the Church has ever had. Art, when taken seriously, when it is an honest expression of life, offers to the Church, to Student Christian Movements, one of the most promising ways in which to carry out our fundamental responsibility of witness. This issue of *The Student World* gives a few illustrations of the ways in which this promise can be fulfilled.

PH. M.

Faith and Culture¹

ROGER MEHL

If we are to determine with as much clarity as possible the relationship which at the same time divides and unites faith and culture, it is fitting first of all that we ask ourselves what are man's intentions when he builds a culture, or, more simply, when he "cultivates" himself.

In the first place, man seeks through culture to construct something which will outlive him (or at least to participate in it), something which will defy his own death. The value of culture, in the eyes of man, is that it permits him to outstrip his own mortality. In this sense there is a profound kinship, attested by the vocabulary of certain languages, between culture and civilization. Culture is the spirit of a civilization, and is reflected in its works. Civilization is the objective, and, therefore, often material, aspect of culture. It is culture considered as *opus ad extra*.

In the second place, and more profoundly, man seeks by culture to make visible in himself the loftiest form of humanity. Man involves himself in culture because he has a presentiment that the present state of his human nature does not exhaust the whole substance of humanity, that in particular he has the right to expect the manifestation in himself and in others of a humanity further stripped of ignorance, prejudices and passions, of a humanity more receptive and generous, because it is open on a world of finer shades of value. The idea of culture implies then that man's calling has not yet been completely fulfilled, and that in history we have an opportunity to achieve a fuller flowering of our humanity. In this sense culture is a great deal more than civilization, which forms only its outward environment: it is possible to live uncouthly in the midst of the most highly developed civilization. Culture is the proper work of man with regard to himself, and it is more exacting than civilization, which strives for success and allows itself to

¹ The substance of an address given at a Conference on "University, Culture and Human Community", sponsored by the W.S.C.F. and Pax Romana, held at the Ecumenical Institute, near Geneva, February 24-27, 1955, and prepared for publication by the author.

be seduced by a concern for the efficacious and the spectacular. Man "cultivates" himself unreasonably, solely for the joy of discovering the potentialities of his humanity. As an example of a cultivated man, I would cite the aging André Gide ; though conscious of the fact that his literary work was accomplished, he none the less endeavoured to penetrate the works of Virgil and the English poets. He was seeking only to assure himself that his own sensibility was capable of union with that of the greatest poets. He chose those of other countries than his own, and this fact alone demonstrates that culture always seeks to free itself from all barriers and limitations imposed on men by their particular circumstances.

Thirdly, if culture thus manifests man's concern to lay hold upon his full humanity, we might say that it is motivated by man's confidence in himself. Culture, to a greater degree than the utilitarian, is always associated with a kind of pride. This pride does not operate primarily in relation with others. It is more subtle : it is the pride of being oneself by means of oneself. It implies that man has the capacity to outdo himself. Thus, in the case of sinful man, culture unfailingly turns against God ; it is a protest against man's dependence on God and on His commandments. Man cannot discover his own greatness without beginning to level accusations against God and to revolt against Him. For culture is undeniable evidence of the greatness of man. Let us not forget that through sin man wished to be great, and also that he has undoubtedly succeeded. We too often tend to link the ideas of sin and of wretchedness, and to look for evidences of sin only where man is wretched and weak. When the Tempter promised man that he would become the equal of the gods, he knew what he was doing. God Himself acknowledged this greatness to which man has attained by sin, and His grace towards sinful man has consisted precisely in guarding him from the dangers of his own greatness. This is why He drove him from the Garden of Eden, and forbade him to approach the Tree of Life (Genesis 3 : 22). This is also why God intervened when men fell to building the Tower of Babel. It is, then, impossible to consider culture as being spiritually neutral. Its greatness and even its perfection point to a hidden guilt.

Two streams of thought in the Church

This explains why the Church has so often evidenced a certain uneasiness with regard to cultural undertakings. The problem of faith and culture arose very early, when cultivated pagans began to enter the Church and to plant within it their culture. Two streams of thought appeared very quickly within the Church: the one, confident approval of culture and of its clearest expression, philosophy; the other, criticism and reticence. This second tendency often made Christianity appear to cultivated people like a form of barbarism. The Church never succeeded in deciding which side of the two to take. It is true that the current of suspicion little by little lost some of its virulence and intransigence, as the fate of Christianity became more closely bound to that of Western civilization, and as the claim to Christianize culture manifested itself in the Church. But a slight uneasiness has remained; it has found expression in monasticism and the eremitic conception of life, in the various forms of pietism and puritanism. In many respects culture was the stake in the conflict between Erasmus and Luther. But at no time has the Church carried these two streams of thought to their logical conclusion. To reject all culture, supposing that this were possible, would be to cut itself off from the world, to enclose Christians in a ghetto, to forget that the world is not an univocal reality, and that Satan certainly reigns within it, but that also, and in the first place, God has made of it the arena of His glory. To say an unreserved "yes" to culture, would mean imprisoning the biblical message in cultural forms which, one day, will be outmoded, and imagining that there are forms of culture and thought which are good in themselves, and which offer the best possible means of expression for Christianity. Unable to give unqualified approval to either of these streams of thought which course secretly or openly within it, Christianity has been reduced to living on a compromise. This compromise has often consisted in imposing certain limits on culture, in refusing it certain kinds of independence, and in trying to freeze it in certain forms which were believed to be eminently Christian. The disgrace contingent on these compromises is that thereby Christianity and

culture both lose their freedom. It seems that there can be no fruitful solution apart from a theological consideration of the meaning of culture.

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To consider theologically the meaning of culture means to pose the following question: is it possible to consider culture as participating in the gracious purpose of God for man? Has culture a place in the work of salvation, or must the Christian and the Church look on it as an *opus alienum*, situated in a neutral zone, foreign to faith? Can culture be considered by the Christian as an autonomous venture which finds its own norms apart from faith? Raising the question of the relationship between faith and culture necessarily means raising that of the relationship between Christology and culture, for there is no Christian faith which does not have Christ as its sole object.

Culture within the natural order

This at once excludes one solution which has been frequently put forward, and which usually represents the Roman Catholic point of view: it is the one which sets culture within an order of creation or natural order and which considers it, even from a Christian point of view, as the natural task of man, which can attain to a kind of natural perfection, on condition that it remains within the confines of its order. It is added that nature, and as a result culture, are certainly not sufficient unto themselves. Their perfection is only relative. The natural order remains subordinate to the order of grace. The latter intervenes to perfect nature, and this process of perfecting consists above all in integrating the natural order into a more complete hierarchy, without being able to call again into question the perfection to which nature has spontaneously attained. Faith, therefore, comes to illuminate the work of culture, but the latter has found its fulfilment outside it. Thus in the economy of the plan of God culture is a stepping stone which has a value of its own. Some have even thought that it could have a function similar to that of the Mosaic law, to be a kind of school-

master to safeguard man as he awaits the final revelations of faith. If in Galatians 3 : 24 we attribute to this word school-master the positive sense of educator, as many exegetes have tended to do, culture will be considered as a sort of preliminary to faith. This attitude has often been taken up, if not towards culture as a whole, at least towards philosophy.

Revealed in Jesus Christ

This thesis seems to be theologically unacceptable, for the simple reason that we know the order of creation and the natural order only through the work of redemption. Without doubt science and culture, as given facts, witness to a knowledge which is independent of nature. But this knowledge is not continuous with the knowledge of faith ; it is legitimate only in so far as we stand outside the scriptural revelation, that is, when we do away with the problem : faith *and* culture. A theological knowledge of nature and of creation, and consequently a theological appreciation of the effect of culture, are possible only through the knowledge of salvation in Jesus Christ. If we wished to understand, apart from the saving act of Christ, what creation and culture are, we would have to pass an entirely negative judgment on them, and see in them primarily sin and rebellion against God. We can know nothing of creation, as it came from the hand of God, nor of the cultural task which man performed within it before the Fall. For we have been driven from the Garden of Eden, and God will never allow us to re-enter it by force. Therefore, creation must first be restored in us, and this can only happen in Jesus Christ. There is no Christian doctrine of creation which is not Christological. Every interpretation of cultural activity implies an anthropology. But we have no true understanding of man apart from Jesus Christ. Even if we were to claim to hold to a formal definition of culture, and to describe it as a kind of projection of man on the world of nature and a reconciliation of man with himself, culture would not thereby become any less a manifestation of human sufficiency ; it would turn into atheism by becoming self-redemption. In Jesus Christ God denies to man precisely this sufficiency. In Jesus Christ He reveals to man

the true essence of his humanity, the only *imago Dei* we can know. And in Jesus Christ God tells us — or rather repeats to us — the way in which he wishes man to reign effectively over the creation which was made for him ; God has not altered His intent since the day of creation. He still wants man to be king of the visible creation, wants him to bring it into subjection, and to keep and cultivate the garden. But precisely here we must note that this eternal order of God is comprehended in its truth only by man as he is redeemed by Jesus Christ and in Him is put on his guard against the pride of self-creation and self-deification. As Karl Barth says ¹, culture is surely the content of the law, for the meaning of the commandments is to bring to birth in us our true humanity ; it is to give us, in the midst of men and things, our true face as men. But we only grasp the meaning of these very commandments when they are fulfilled in Christ.

We are here presented with a harsh alternative. Either we claim to give our own definition to the *imago Dei* in man and to deduce from it our cultural tasks, thus defining them by means of reason, of human "nature", forgetting that, because of sin, these realities are given over to death. Or else we content ourselves with understanding our own being and our tasks only in Jesus Christ, through whom has been restored to us the vocation which God willed for us from the beginning.

Significance of the revelation for culture

Our understanding of ourselves in Jesus Christ has a decisive importance for culture and its meaning.

1. We understand first that man is not made for self-sufficiency, for self-determination and self-creation, but for sonship. He is destined to know the fullness of his existence only if he accepts to live as a child in his Father's house. From that point onwards the command of God to keep and cultivate the garden (a command which defines culture) takes on clear meaning. The command is not restrictive ; the son has all the powers of

¹ See KARL BARTH, *Die Kirche und die Kultur* in *Die Theologie und die Kirche*.

his Father. We even have the right to carry into effect, in its principle, the Greek concept of proportion. To keep and cultivate the garden does not mean that man must respect a number of prohibitions, that, for example, it would be Christian to push the analysis of matter as far as the atom, but that it would be reprehensible to take up research on the interior of the atom. The following question is posed for us by our sonship: what is the end of our cultural works, is it to glorify God or to glorify ourselves? This is not a theoretical and pious question: it is of very concrete significance, for example, for the painter who is representing man — or the Virgin. Man in all his undertakings must remember that he can only be glorified in His Saviour, and that his only concern must be to know how he can truly offer his body (and his works are part of his body) as a sacrifice acceptable to God.

2. Cultural activity cannot be taken up as a work of salvation. There is no redemption through art, nor through knowledge, nor through science or technics. The Christian must therefore reject the claim of culture, so frequently made, to effect the reconciliation of man with his fellows, with himself and with nature. Cultural activities must be pursued by the Christian, not that they may effect this reconciliation, but because this reconciliation has already been accomplished by Christ. It is to our humanity restored by Christ that culture can bear witness.

3. However, since man remains to his last day *simul justus ac peccator*, without its being possible to make a distinction between the righteous man and the sinful man in him, culture cannot be called good, whatever be the value we attribute to it. Man's cultural achievement is like the temple at Jerusalem. Jesus does not deny its beauty, but He adds: "Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down" (Matt. 24: 2). For these words are spoken in an eschatological context. No work of man, even that which he raises up to the glory of God, will escape the judgment of God. We must see our own works in the perspective of this judgment, and present them for God's forgiveness. Humanity would like to be able to rejoice unreservedly in its

works, at least in those which are successful, and on which the seal is set by history. This attitude is forbidden for the Christian. He must remember the deep-seated ambiguity of everything which he creates, and can never pronounce the *valde bonum* which the Almighty Father pronounced on His creation. He cannot disregard the guilt which weighs upon all his undertakings. If he does not repudiate them, it is because he is still able to implore God's forgiveness for them and for himself. Men were right to push forward their knowledge of matter until they split the atom, but is it not obvious that they must also ask the forgiveness of God for the disintegration which thus takes place?

4. The history of the world is not the judgment of the world. Even if history eliminates, rightly or wrongly, certain works of culture, if it brings cultures to birth, death and rebirth, it still does not have the final word. God alone will pronounce that. Thus the final significance of our cultural creations escapes us. The truth of our lives and of our works will only be made manifest on the last day. But the believer, who knows that he is accepted into the covenant of grace, can hope that God will not reject either him or his works, but, in the Kingdom, will give them their true meaning. Will not nations and kings be summoned to bring their tribute in the heavenly Jerusalem? We live, then, in expectation of the revelation of the meaning of what we do, and we know that this revelation will astonish us. These affirmations of faith should not stifle within us our creative impulses, but they should lead us to the concept of a cultural pluralism, should move us to renounce the cultural totalitarianism of which the West has been guilty so often. There is no absolute culture, neither can we conceive of an undeviating progression which would lead us to "Culture". Such claims always betray our desire to achieve what is good in itself in our own strength, and to pronounce a final judgment.

Revelation as a source of culture

We must go one step further and establish an even more intimate connection between culture and faith. Not only does the revelation accorded us in Jesus Christ permit us to be at

once both open and reserved towards all culture, to deny its totalitarian claims, and to love it in its ambiguity, but this revelation is itself the source of an authentic culture. In fact, the end of all culture is to bring forth in us a fully developed form of humanity; and all culture is created by the word — is the fruit of dialogue. If universities are seats of culture, it is because they are privileged places where man acts upon man by words¹. God speaks to us in Jesus Christ, who is His Word. When this Word summons us, then a new form of humanity comes into being in us, which is in conformity with the will of God. So we must not say: first faith, then culture. Culture appears at the heart of faith itself. It is not by chance that, wherever the Church of Jesus Christ has been established, it has given birth to a culture, and sometimes provoked the renewal of cultures. Let us not say that his faith makes of every Christian a cultivated man, but rather that the new stature which springs up in him renders him capable of understanding cultures, of welcoming and of developing them. A Christianity which does not provoke a cultural movement is almost always a Christianity which no longer comprehends the mystery of the faith.

Christian attitude towards a given culture

However, our discussion cannot be limited to a study of the source and first budding of culture and to considering it as the task and vocation of the Christian. For the term denotes also an objective gift of history: the culture which is offered me by the civilization in which I live, and which has been perfectly capable of developing without contact with Christianity. What will be the attitude of the Christian and the Church when confronted with this given culture?

This attitude is, first of all, made up of discernment. The gift of the Holy Spirit manifests itself in the discernment of spirits. This consists not only in critical judgments but also in positive appreciations. From a negative point of view, the Christian must be alive to the seeds of death which all culture

¹ Read in this connection the article by Paul Ricœur on the cultural task of the university, "The Word is My Kingdom", *Esprit*, February 1955.

bears within it. A culture will seem to him endangered in proportion to the extent to which it is sure of itself, ready to proceed to a synthesis and to become set in a system. Cultures which are reflected in a Hegelian or a Marxist universe are dangerous, because anything new which appears in them is immediately broken down into its elements and explained. Although we cannot set up an absolutely general rule here — for fear of putting ourselves in the place of the Holy Spirit — we may say that the Christian will feel himself more at ease in a culture of inquiry, of openness, and even of anxiety, than in a culture which is too conceptualized. Monotony is the danger inherent in the technical cultures of our modern civilization.

Let us be well aware that everything we have said about the ambiguity of culture undoubtedly forbids us to speak of a Christian culture, but it does not authorize us to anathematize all forms of culture which are born of secularization. Let us recall the words of Jesus : "... you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children" (Matt. 7 : 11). Sinful man has remained man ; divine grace has prevented him from falling lower than his humanity. In his worst excesses he does not become an animal. The perceptive Christian should know how to recognize in the surrealists, in Picasso, in abstract painting, as well as in Nietzsche and in technical achievements all that witnesses to and proclaims the shape of humanity, the anxious quest of humanity for itself. We must not become rigid and put ourselves on the defensive against such moving grandeur.

The attitude of the Christian must, in the second place, be one of "presence". At this point we must level certain accusations against Christians and the Church. For they are rarely present and active where new forms of culture are being worked out. Nor are they often found in the vital centres of our civilization. We have acquired the unfortunate habit of noting the evolution which is going on, of receiving culture ready-made... and of complaining that it has so little of the stamp of Christianity upon it. We set culture and the Church over against each other, as though the Church, through the faithful, must not be present wherever the nature of man is called in question. Because of our cultural passivity, we are

responsible for all forms of art wherein man, having been unduly glorified, is scandalously distorted.

Finally, because of the Gospel, the Christian will share culture's concern lest there be a violent return of barbarism or of the subtle barbarism constituted by the absence of culture. Even a fundamentally atheistic culture is preferable to that, for it is never a form of innocence. For culture at least gives Christianity the opportunity for a dialogue, in which man can be confronted with the Gospel. For the Gospel speaks an intelligible language; the Good News is a spoken and written word, and the spread of Christianity was aided by a realm of culture. We therefore have a duty to offer all the intellectual and cultural conditions which can facilitate the presentation of the Gospel. Our great responsibility consists in the fact that every man can be confronted with the message of the Scriptures. The rest is not our affair. That is why a purely technical culture, based solely on scientific abstractions and on the deceptive emotional prestige of the visible image, constitutes an undeniable danger for the preaching of the Gospel. It is not impossible that in the future means of verbal communication will again overtake the written word, and this eventuality could have as distressing consequences as the substitution of the film for the book. Finally, the Christian cannot remain indifferent when he finds himself confronted by a culture which has a certain ontological solidity and which leaves some place, beside scientific problems, for the sense of mystery. We are not unaware that this sense of mystery is in no way a precursor of Christianity, and that it can lead to the worst kind of religious aberrations. But it is important that Christians should be able to use the language which Paul used before the philosophers of Athens: "What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (Acts 17 : 23).

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Let us end with this two-fold conclusion, which is perhaps contradictory. In the first place, it is the duty of the Church to summon man to his cultural task, as to one which is part and parcel of his properly evangelistic task. This cultural task is certainly encumbered with guilt. But the mistake would be

to fear running the risk of this guilt. We must recall here the paradoxical words in which Luther summed up his whole doctrine of sanctification: *pecca fortiter*. It is the duty of the justified man to go forward courageously, knowing that he cannot accomplish the perfect, but in the assurance that the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ will not fail him. Culture is the field in which justified man can demonstrate that he has been set free *for freedom* (Gal. 5: 1).

But in the second place, the Church, while encouraging cultural activity, must remember its fundamental ambiguity; it must arouse by its preaching a critical attitude towards all cultural undertakings, and recall the fact that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and that there is no salvation through culture, even though it be theological culture. Culture must be kept on the level of the penultimate, that which will have to face the last judgment.

To encourage culture and to put man on guard against it — therein lies the two-fold task of authentic preaching.

The Crisis in Modern Art and the Christian Church¹

HELMUTH UHRIG

Modern art, in spite of its apparent triumphal progress, is without any doubt at the present moment undergoing one of its most severe crises. Exhibitions and magazines which do not present the "Old Masters" of modern art are uninteresting and wearisome. What passes today for "the very latest" was to be seen as many as twenty-five to thirty years ago in the work of the great revolutionaries of modern art: except that there it was considerably better. As early as Cézanne we hear a warning against the "colour daubers of modern art", and Ozenfant, in a mood of haughty, biting scorn, criticizes the "fixed patterns of Picasso's offshoots and intoxicated admirers".

Franz Marc, in his foreword to the *Blauer Reiter*, said that the heritage of the past was exhausted, and that the world was demeaning itself with poor substitutes. In this way he justifies the necessity for pressing forward into untrodden artistic territory, and in his own way makes a contribution to the revolution of modern art. Do these words of Franz Marc hold for modern art today? Has it, too, eaten up its heritage? Is the world today demeaning itself with poor substitutes?

At all events, the great creations of the masters of modern art are today all too often being boiled down into a cheap, repulsive, fashionable pretence, which will not stand the light of morning because it no longer possesses any artistic depth.

To a large extent this describes the contemporary condition of so-called modern art, which even the most refined dialectic and the best propaganda cannot trick out in other dress. Those lovers of modern art who keep their eyes open are worried about its future. There is need today for frank and critical speaking, even if it is ill received in some quarters.

¹ The substance of an address given at the Federation Chalet on "Christian Faith and Drama", held in Holland, in 1954, and prepared for publication by the author.

I am under no illusion that in what follows I have discovered a thorough-going clarification of the situation. Its ramifications are far too complicated for that ; it is my sole intention to take a part in the self-criticism of modern art, for which there is such an urgent need, in the hope that by this means service will be rendered to modern art and to us all.

What is "modern art" ? "Modern" comes from the Latin *modo* = "just created". This would seem to mean that modern art is the art which has just been created, "present-day art". Is that what modern art is ? Let us remember that its roots go back as far as 1870, and that the great masters of modern art had their actual hey-day at the turn of the century and up to the years between 1925 and 1930. Can we still speak of "present-day art" ? At least we should be using "present" in a very wide sense. But it is impossible to equate modern art with present-day art, even if only because not only "modern art", but also "reactionary art", and much else, is being produced at the present time.

Modern art is more than simply present-day art. Deep in modern art there lies a quite specific principle which springs from the human spirit. Indeed its compass is perhaps such that one must seek in it not merely an intellectual, but a spiritual, in the sense of religious, urge.

From the infinitely varied problems posed by modern art I wish to select just a few which, none the less, are for me among the most essential.

The artist's freedom

Among the basic propositions of modern art is the following : there is no art without artistic freedom ! That was not the case in previous civilizations and ages. The artistic process was bound to very specific laws of form which one was bound to observe. No-one who trespassed against these laws went unpunished. For the modern artist the imposition of such formulae would be unthinkable. The springs of artistry would immediately dry up if he had to move along fixed paths. For him the possibility of developing as an artist stands or falls according to whether he has, or is deprived of, artistic freedom.

In spiritual¹ realms where the artist is deprived of artistic freedom, the growth of modern art is impossible. So we may assert that modern art stands or falls with the artist's freedom. We can even go so far as to say that modern art *is* the art of freedom !

The artist's individuality

Paul Westheim once said that when the Goncourt brothers declared in Paris in 1870 that the *How* of a work of art was more important than the *What*, modern art was born. It is in the nature of modern art that it gives a greater place to the *How* — and naturally at the same time to the *Who*, for these two cannot be separated — than to the *What*. The "Gardens of Arles" are not interesting in themselves. They became important in modern art only because Van Gogh painted them. This points to a principle which governs modern art : the individuality of the artist is more important than the motif of his painting. Art cannot be separated from the artist, and art comes into being only at the point where an artist in an unrepeatable and sovereign fashion bends the media of creation to his service. Unrepeatability and the sovereign will are two of the uncompromising demands made by modern art. So the only artist worthy of the name is one who has this gift and can give it form. It is immediately apparent that the demand for unrepeatability and the sovereign will can only be realized on the basis of the complete freedom of the individual.

If the artist's individuality is more important than the motif, it follows that he has the right to treat the latter entirely as he will. He may change, transform, or even deform colours and shapes. The sole principle is the state of tension which the artist needs for the artistic expression of his work. The principle governing the possibility of transformation lies exclusively in his artistic intuition, and in what he has to say through his work of art.

It is true that there have been in art, before now, revaluations of the forms employed, or, rather, formal changes of the motif,

¹ The word "spiritual" is used throughout to mean "pertaining to the human spirit". It has no specifically religious sense unless it is clearly stated in the context that this is the case. (Translator.)

but these were determined by the motif itself, and not by the artist. There is a fundamental difference between the "deformations" of the past, and those of modern art. We may say that the former were "objective", while the latter are "subjective deformations". There is a connection between them, however. It is to be hoped that, with the increasing religious spirituality of modern art, subjective deformation will rise to the point of objective expression.

Freedom and individuality are two of the corner-stones of modern art. It is solely on this basis that its quality of unrepeatability and uniqueness is to be understood. For this reason it is also only on this basis that crises, when they occur, can arise.

"Abstract" and "concrete"

There is a contemporary tendency to play "concrete" and "abstract" art off against one another in discussions about modern art. And among the so-called *avant-garde* there is a sufficient number of hangers-on who look down contemptuously on every artist whose work is not "abstract". It is, moreover, their opinion that only "abstract art" can effect the salvation and rescue of mankind. It is good that one of the best known spokesmen of modern art, Will Grohmann, has already repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that there is no real antithesis involved in arguing for or against "abstract" art. For modern art penetrates into both spheres.

So crises are not born out of the necessity for deciding for or against a particular *genre* of art. If crisis there is, its roots lie deeper.

The revolution is over

In the first place, it must be stated that modern art is a historical phenomenon, with its rise, its climax and its decline. Ozenfant, writing in 1928 about "Criticism" in his book *Art* (the German translation is entitled *Leben und Gestaltung*) says: "To-day in the *Cahiers d'Art* Zervos and Tériade are saddled with the thankless task of having continually to discover

something new; it is not their fault that the months only have thirty days"; he thus admits that the revolution of modern art was already at that time over.

So it might be the case that the first genuine cause of the crisis in modern art is that the revolutionary awakening is over, and anyone who thinks he has to knock down walls which are no longer there makes a fool of himself. Modern art has established itself so completely as an artistic event that twentieth-century creations are utterly unthinkable apart from it. Nowadays the only ones who still resist it are chronic reactionaries, or those who on principle reject the freedom of the individual.

So let us admit the following: that there are no essential discoveries still to be made in the field of the artistic problems connected with modern art. The great masters of the time have accomplished such perfect work that we may only bow before them.

"Individuation"

But there is yet another crisis, which lies deeper, and is more hidden. Especially in "abstract" circles, a new concept is today familiar: "individuation". More has happened here than the mere adoption of a slogan. G. K. Schmelzeisen, in his excellent essay, "Creative Art and Alchemy", printed in the almanac of the Waldemar Klein Press, *Schri kunst schri*, for 1954, demonstrates the meaning of "individuation". Since such a famous press has published this essay and as it appears in such an important place, one must conclude that it carries some weight in the discussion about modern art. It is said here that "the work of art is less important than the process of its growth", that the work of art is the "objectified end of the artistic individuation process". It continues by saying, however, that the task of this artistic individuation process is a "coming to oneself". The task of the observer is also to "come to himself". "This alone constitutes so-called 'enjoyment of art', which in fact is less enjoyment than deliverance... The observer must participate in a highly active way if he is to experience a work of art like this: not as a

product, but as a genesis. It is an error of inartistic and, therefore, commonplace contemporaries if they expect the work of art to mediate to them a thing of beauty which is cut to fit their own limited horizon." Then follows a quotation from Rilke: "The beautiful is nothing but the beginning of the terrible." And, continues Schmelzeisen, the meaning of this "can only be apprehended by the man who knows the terrors which threaten every individuation".

Quite apart from the arrogance which speaks out of these sentences which — in opposition to the freedom conceived of by modern art — considers everyone who is incapable of following through such an "individuation process" in his own person as a "commonplace contemporary", the sequence of thought here described cannot be accepted uncritically. It is an undisguised attempt to translate the revolution of modern art into a particular ideology.

Gnostic tendencies

Conceiving the function of art as being the means of an "individuation process", the final goal of which is self-deliverance through self-discovery, means believing in the autonomy of man. But that means in turn that the crisis in modern art is no longer an artistic or spiritual crisis, but a religious one, in which the real question is not about formal problems, but about articles of faith. Desiring to tread the path of self-deliverance, no matter by what means, is *gnosis*.¹

But it is unequivocally true, precisely according to the most recent research and discoveries, that *gnosis* is a religion diametrically opposed to Christianity. In a recent address Professor Schoeps (Erlangen) drew attention to the fact that it is nonsense to speak of Christian *gnosis*. It is as contradictory as speaking of a white horse which is black or a black horse which is white.

So it is that modern art is today threatened with seizure by modern gnostic tendencies which would exploit it for their

¹ Gnosis in the history of philosophy refers to a special sort of knowledge of a mystical character which has redeeming power.

own purposes. This would unfit it for the Christian sphere. But that must never happen. It will certainly be the case that this tendency, which sees in art, and especially in modern art, an "individuation process" of gnostic type, will spread further. No-one will seriously check it, nor desire to do so. But we must make every effort to see that the victory won by the revolution of modern art also bears its fruits in the Christian forms of our time.

The task of the Church

Part of the secret of Christian forms is that Jesus Christ desires to incarnate Himself in a unique and appropriate fashion in every man and in every period. Personal freedom of decision is genuinely Christian. Thus it is that the Christian congregation, the Body of Christ on earth, draws its life from the witness of the individual member. And, for this reason, the thesis that the Who is essentially implicated in the What is likewise genuinely Christian. In spite of the fact that modern art did not spring from the soil of the Christian churches — it is a lamentable fact that the Christian churches did not recognize the abysmal need out of which modern art was born — the last and deepest shocks of modern art are rooted in the longing of man for God. In the last resort, the revolution of modern art is the outcry for God of man who has fallen into the abyss, the cry for a deliverance which art alone cannot bring him. This is also the reason why the modern artist lapses into *gnosis* when he is shown no other way of deliverance. At this point the Christian Church is confronted with a task which it can only with the greatest difficulty fulfil, for the powerful propaganda of the autonomists, laying claim to sole possession of modern art, dissuades many who stand within the Church from occupying themselves seriously with modern art. They retreat in matters of artistic formulation to what appears to them to be an acceptable middle position of the historical past, and thus fall prey to dangerous restorative tendencies, which are basically unevangelical, and from which they are in no position to understand the situation of modern art, much less to come to its aid in this period of crisis.

There is no doubt that modern art is shot through with autonomistic and gnostic tendencies. If we take the Gospel as starting point, these tendencies in modern art cannot bring about the deliverance of man for which it longs, for deliverance is possible solely in Jesus Christ. So it is part of the task of the Christian churches to help modern art through its crisis, by making a clear distinction between its living powers of formal creation on the one hand and autonomistic ideologies on the other. But it is, in turn, part of this task that the Church should have a precise acquaintance with the formal-artistic and the intellectual-spiritual preoccupation of modern art.

If it takes up this task, it will signify more for the Church than Christian mission in the autonomistic realm. It will be a significant path leading to the discovery of its own Christian form in our time.

On Christianity and Art

Dear Philippe Maury :

When you asked me to write something for *The Student World* about Christianity and Art, I replied that I could not produce a systematic treatise on the subject, but stated that the matter was of such concern to me that I would write an "open letter" to you in which I would assemble a lot of ponderings I've engaged in over the years.

Several years ago Mr. William Faulkner was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, and on that occasion made a brief and eloquent speech. The last sentences made reference to a practice which requires some explanation to be understood. Over here in America during the war thousands of boys were in military training, and in the course of it got shifted from place to place all over the considerable geography which constitutes these states. A habit grew up — a sort of half-crazy symbol of uncertainty and loneliness, a verbal quip in the face of sardonic fate — which enjoyed an enormous vogue. On railway cars, busses, on the walls of public buildings and in corners of strange place, these boys would scrawl the silly affirmation, "Kilroy was here".

Mr. Faulkner in his speech picked up this floating bit of behaviour, penetrated to the human affirmation which accounts for it, and set it forth as a symbol conveying vaster meanings. Here is the paragraph :

When the last sing-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock... even then there will still be one sound! That of man's puny and inexhaustible voice—still talking.

Faulkner then went on to speak of his work as an artist as an "...effort to carve, no matter how crudely, on the wall of that final oblivion in the tongue of the human spirit 'Kilroy was here'."

That, in a way, is the answer to one of the questions students ask — is art necessary? The very question reminds one of the sly book published some years ago by Mr. James Thurber. He was apparently troubled by the disproportionate fascination that sex holds for millions of people and asked in the title of his book, *Is Sex Necessary?* The question of necessity is completely silly when one is confronted with the structural built-in fact. And the *fact* of man's immemorial art-creating, art-responding nature is as indisputable as bisexuality.

Art is not something men create as a sort of leisure-time diversion; it is generated as a necessary human activity given the human situation. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch once addressed his students at Cambridge in the following moving words:

Is it possible, gentlemen, that you can have read one, two, three or more of the acknowledged masterpieces of English literature without having it borne in on you that they are great because they are alive, and traffic not with cold celestial certainties, but with men's hopes, aspirations, doubts, loves, hates, breakings of the heart; the glory and the vanity of human endeavour, the transience of beauty, the capricious uncertain lease on which you and I hold life, the dark coast to which we inevitably steer; all that amuses or vexes, all that gladdens, saddens, maddens us men and women on this brief and mutable trajet which yet must be home for a while, the anchorage of our hearts?

So there it is! The art of a people is the rhetorical response they make to the given situation of human existence; it's the stuff they create to scrawl across "... this brief and mutable trajet", the defiant, spirit-born "Kilroy was here". The general prayer in the liturgy of the Church does not evade or question this; it simply prays, "... give success to all lawful occupations on land and sea; to all pure arts and useful knowledge; and crown them with thy blessing".

Now let me ask what it is that art is and does, and then ask the question if this being and doing manifests a completely specific difference when it operates within the Christian understanding of human existence. The questions have got to be put in that order, for creation precedes redemption, a man is a creature of earth before he is a citizen of heaven, he is a man before God before he is a Christian man.

Man in this world is in a situation that always quietly, sometimes traumatically, batters him from beginning to end. His life in solitude and among his fellows is a dizzy process of construction, demolition, construction again. He thinks he understands, and then he is pounded by data which demolish his understanding, and has to build up again a deeper and broader-based one. He thinks he knows what the drama of human life means, but this knowledge is secure only within small patterns of experience. His experience becomes wider and wilder, his protective comprehensiveness, his order-making patterns are pulverized — and he's off again on a new construction.

Men do not take this process silently or without fighting back. They fight back at the encircling "chaos and old ancient night" with that multiform endeavour which is called culture. The rise and enormous proliferation of positive law, the noble effort to achieve true generalizations in philosophy, the endless shifting and re-formations that characterize social organization, and the balancing of interests in the economic and political order — all of these are efforts to define, order, and celebrate the meaning of human life. The glory of this human drama is utterly missed if we think this embattled race will settle merely for tolerable order, either! We want significant order, meaningful patterns, shapes and structures and embellishments that suggest and evoke the subterranean conviction that the entire enterprise is not a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". It all *means* — terribly! And art flourishes with vigour both when there is a consensus about a provisional meaning (as at the time of Queen Elizabeth in England) and when the inrolling tides of meaninglessness threaten to engulf (as in our own time).

All art, so it seems to me, is a function of life's mystery — a mystery insoluble but undismissable. It is man's grave or sardonically humorous way of reminding himself of the importance of his own omissions. He gets his ideas ordered, creates the trappings wherewith to announce the solid hierarchy of his values. Nobility, for instance, belongs to the well-born, the cultivated, the persons who, by individual mental and traditional force, have forged a pattern of behaviour out of

multiple possibilities. So the nobles are painted : the commanding and secure look, the serene brow and mien, the quiet knowing eyes. Good ! Now we know what is the face that becomes a noble soul ! And *just then*, born up out of life's wild unsystematic, defiantly refusing to domesticate the truth in clear and cognitive symbols — just then comes along a Rembrandt, Goya, Daumier. They clutch and set forth authentic signs of nobility from ignoble places that shatter us with the reminder of the importance of our own omissions !

Art penetrates in order to establish truth, shatters in order on solidier ground again to build, cracks categories in order to dramatize the mercurial truth of things that will not be at home in a cognative house. It is precisely this function of all grave art which constitutes its kinship with the noblest efforts of the mind, and gives it fellowship with all enterprises that aim at understanding. All that discovers false constructions is in order to higher constructions ; that is why criticism is among the legitimate and cherished activities of man. How art may do this task may be illustrated by considering how works of art contribute to men's deep comprehension of truth in such a field of discourse as ethics.

Ethics is an inquiry into how men ought to act ; it inquires into motivations, intentions, means, ends, dynamics of decision. It is only possible to construct a philosophical ethics by abstracting from beheld facts some kind of general principles. That the "normal" should be acknowledged and urged in terms of such principles is a necessary social-intellectual function. But this function can acquire authority only to the degree that it ignores the range and variety of infinitely novel persons and situations.

Works of art concerned with the penetration and celebration of man's ethical existence carry on a kind of reminding dance around the minds of ethical thinkers ! Such works take positive delight in the excision of the particular, the revelation of the nuclear character of the individual and the novel, and serve to restore the proportion of the living truth to all reductionist schemes. Jane Austen did this maddeningly well in her novels. With terrifying keenness she "... chose irony... she maintained her distance by diverting herself and her audience with an

unengaged laughter, by setting irony, the instrument of her temperament, to sharpen and expose all the incongruities between form and fact, all the delusions intrinsic to conventional art and conventional society". Stendahl's young cleric, Dostoevski's Grushenka, Antonio Moravia's prostitute in *A Woman of Rome*, and Franz Werfel's old nurse, Barbara, in *The Pure in Heart* — these and a thousand others serve the truth, for they concretely complicate into humility all efforts to schematize the living.

Such a work of art is a Bach fugue. Here in a clear pattern is certainly a vital assertion, a shapely response to life which has absolutely no experiential ground to support it. There is nothing in my vacillating, uncertain, ambiguous and mixed inner life to support such an assertion of a possibility! But the very *dream* that life should come somehow to assume the swift, directional, unambiguous victory and completeness of this music, is itself a fact! And out of the non-cognized realm of the possible the artist has created a work which flies in the face of the concrete facts and singingly celebrates a possibility. If this possibility did not exist, the music would be unintelligible; that it is not unintelligible confirms the vitality of the possibility. All passionate negation is, in virtue of its passion, an affirmation. Art is a medium for affirmation that outflanks the facts — to affirm the Fact.

Is there, then, such a thing as Christian art? There is, and there is not. There is not, in the sense that faith does not bestow upon the believer any short cuts or favours. Art has her own insides; and the rules, labours, sensibilities, disciplines, the anguish of sheer craftsmanship is required of all her children. But there is such a thing as a Christian art, in the sense that the Christian artist has, by virtue of his faith, a depth of diagnosis, a structural perception of the meaning of damnation and grace, an angle of vision which is both his despair and his delight. Eric Gill, in his essay, *The Priesthood of Craftsmanship*, has this to say:

What is a work of art? A word made flesh. That is the truth, in the clearest sense of the text. A word, that which emanates from the mind. Made flesh, a thing seen, a thing known, the immeasurable translated into terms of the measurable.

This knowledge, this angle of vision, is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Christian who is an artist cannot, *qua* artist, vade, suppress, or ignore what has been given to him, *qua* forgiven sinner who now, as a man in Christ, is a new creation for whom all things have become new. The Holy Spirit, who "proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified", will not content Himself with captive residence within the room of solitary piety. This Spirit is *Advocate* — pleading for the reception of another possibility; *Paraclete* — pleading God's Incarnate *yes* against history's and my own spirit's negation; *Illuminator* — pleading holy meaning in the midst of meaninglessness and despair; *Fire of Love*, pointing to and embracing man's recalcitrant spirit in the active arms of holy love. The artist, that is to say, knows the word of humanity, and his vocation is to give it a "... local habitation and a name". The Christian artist must know no less, and be sensitized, fascinated, even broken by no less. But the Christian artist has heard, received, responded to another Word. This Word does not negate, release him from, or dispense with the *human* word. Indeed, it became this human word:

... from no necessity
 Condescended to exist and to suffer death
 And, scorned on a scaffold, ensconced in His life
 The human household.

Just as the Word became word, the holy the earthly, the ultimate the historical and the contingent — so the Christian artist must live and work with the opacities of earth, witnessing in his work to the Incarnation. His life is not only, to return to Mr. Faulkner's figure, given to the effort to scrawl across his personal existence the phrase, "Kilroy was here". By virtue of his Christian faith he knows that the very ultimate thing in human existence, which is the creator of it, was also here in the form of the flesh and, if I may say so without irreverence, he must address, look at, and speak his speech about life as a testimony to the eternal Kilroy who has also shared his human situation. His work, that is to say, must be a double transparency: a transparency never untrue to the truth and

reality of nature and human experience, and at the same time this work must be evocative or declaratory of the holy meaning that infuses all fragmented meanings.

Each one of us may well ask if such a task can be accomplished in our day. So general and accelerated is the destruction or evaporation of all symbols, so bereft of traditional association the emerging symbols of our time, that one may well wonder if the drama of salvation can wrest from them a theatre for the play or persons and properties for the production. But this wonder and despair are really unfaith. Gerard Manly Hopkins cried that

The world is aflame with the splendor of God
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

and there is evidence to attest the indestructible creativity of the Holy Spirit in our generation. The terrible grace of God, which much more abounds where sin so monumentally abounds, shines out from Rouault's Christ figures, and the pathos of human existence, for which only the Word of Grace is aught but mockery, peers from the faces of his clowns. Madonnas, patriarchs and apostles may be impossible subjects for this era; but the Incarnate energy of God's eternal love can again as before make the very stones of our common experience cry out His praises.

JOSEPH SITTLER.

Dramatic Art as a Means of Communication ¹

DANIEL ATGER

In a speech he made in 1946 the great actor-producer Louis Jovet could say, "If a play is not concerned to communicate and to awaken emotion, if the writer serves only interest or vanity, the play is unacceptable."

There speaks a man of the theatre! At the roots of a dramatic work of any worth there is first of all the desire of an artist wishing to encounter the adherence and win the assent of his public, to win their friendship, and thus to communicate to others what he bears, and brings to fruition, in the depths of his own being. Art presupposes the desire to communicate, whether conscious or unconscious, and this is particularly the case with dramatic art.

Every work indeed has in view both an expressive aim : to pass on to others what properly belongs to the writer, or the most genuine elements he has discovered within himself, and an aesthetic aim : to strike a chord, to awaken the sympathy of the audience by the way in which it appeals to their senses.

This double aim is a response to a social need to communicate, a need to establish communication between ourselves and our fellows (this is why the theatre is necessarily expressive, dramatic) ; and a need as well to affirm an existing community and to raise it to an aesthetic level (this is why the theatre is also an art). Dramatic language is in search of an audience which will approve of it. There is no having one without the other in the theatre. There is no communication without communion, but neither is there any communion without communication. In this way we escape from the false alternative of art for art's sake, on the one hand, or art simply as a means, on the other.

¹ The substance of two speeches given at the Federation Chalet on "Christian Faith and Drama", held in Holland in 1954.

It is a unique quality of dramatic art that it is inconceivable in the absence of communication to an audience. If a sonata may *à la rigueur* be composed, or a picture be painted, solely for the personal satisfaction of the artist, the case of drama is very different. A play written solely for the pleasure of the author belongs, not to the domain of dramatic art, but to literature ; for a dramatic work is always the result of a process of collective artistic creation with the writer as its starting point, passing by way of the actors, stage-designers and scene-shifters, until it reaches its climax before an audience which participates in it.

So communication through drama is not a message, but a game, played with its own conventions, rules and techniques. In the sense in which we use the word, communication will be taken to mean the act of transmission, and not the opinion, information or message transmitted.

There is no doubt that art consists more in the act or possibility of transmission, or the will to transmit, than in this something, great or small, which one desires to convey.

The theatre of ideas

It now remains to us to consider the relation between the theatre and ideas, to see how drama can convey from author to audience ideological, political or religious choices.

We must notice, to begin with, that alleged intellectualism has always been the main cry of all audiences which at the beginning have refused the works of artistic innovators. Perhaps a certain familiarity, the mellowing influence of time and adaptation on the part of the audience, is necessary if these works are to be recognized as real masterpieces. Racine's first audiences accused him of intellectualism. And this always has as an overtone "cold", "distant", deprived of the human warmth and emotion demanded by the public in artistic matters.

In fact, the relation between idea and emotion is, in the theatre, much more complicated than is generally imagined. An idea may be the instrument of emotion. It even happens often that the emotion it evokes is much more powerful than the emotion evoked by a so-called sentimental work. Instead

of condemning the theatre of ideas out of hand, we must simply recognize the fact that every play which runs contrary to the political, ideological or religious doctrines, consciously or unconsciously shared or professed by the public, is regarded by them as doctrinaire, political and ideological. The moment a writer is no longer entirely of the opinion of his audience, any play becomes somehow an "intellectual" play, a propaganda play. And, paradoxical as it may seem, I think it is precisely at that moment that he is creative, that he becomes an innovator and an artist.

An artist's failure generally goes hand in hand with facile communion with his public. But it appears only later on that this communion in fact masks an absence of communication, that the author is offering nothing but poor, banal ideas, political, religious or emotional commonplaces, whereas art can only spring from what as yet does not exist ; it is not simply communion, but communion within a revelation.

The upholders of the theatre of ideas may be divided into two distinct groups. The first, doubtless the majority, while reinstating the idea in artistic creation, denounce the danger with which it threatens a work of art. They wish to preserve its universal character, and to deprive it of any elements which might be too real, or too utilitarian. They are afraid of the author's using the theatre in order to convince, to impose ideas which, valuable and interesting as they may be, would lose their truth and serenity in their intent to win over the audience. There is one certain danger : the ideological theatre is one of the frontier posts neighbouring on the propaganda theatre. Between the two there lies the clearly marked frontier between art and publicity, between art and an ideological undertaking.

In the interest of this demand for universality, many dramatic writers have preferred to have recourse to myths rather than to contemporary events, and to set the action of their plays in non-existent, indeterminate places, in order to attain a serenity and loftiness of thought which, in their opinion, would have been excluded by an over-realistic framework too close to the present-day world. Here there is without any doubt a rather primitive subterfuge, which in fact deceives no-one. One could name great writers who have taken their contemporary

society as a setting, and whose works have attained dramatic intensity and won the stature of myth, among others Gabriel Marcel, Camus and Sartre.

This is why the second group of upholders of the ideological theatre — let us call them the “realists” — while refraining from falling into the trap of propaganda, affirm the right of the dramatic artist to extend his creative freedom, unchecked, into every domain. The claim of “art for art’s sake” seems to them to be a manœuvre of withdrawal on the part of an artist who sets himself up in an ivory tower and thus condemns himself to the refusal to communicate.

Artist and audience

It is, in the first place, strange to realize that what is today an important and controversial problem used not to exist as such. In antiquity, during the Middle Ages, and even the Renaissance, art was part of public life, and artists did not hesitate to make the most of this fact. Their theatre was, of necessity, ideological, and it expressed, or rather reflected, both in its themes and its proper language, a collective reality much more than a personal experience removed from the social context. Between the artist and his audience there was direct *rapport*, and therefore a lively and fruitful interaction. People saw in their theatre the great trends of thought, the motivating ideas, and the religious themes of a firmly structured world. In fact, the theatre could be ideological because art was the art of the people, because it was aware of its social mission: not to convince or to convert, but to keep that fertile contact with a humanity to which it was the means of its own self-revelation, without sacrificing itself to facility or to demagogy.

Today, despite a number of recent endeavours, the theatre’s field of action has narrowed considerably. Art has cut itself off from the people. What is known as “the public” is, in the last resort, nothing but a little group of intellectuals or middle-class people whose culture demands art which is developed in a hothouse. With a public like this, based on class, an attitude of “art for art’s sake” brings with it impossible demands which in fact paralyze the artist’s freedom of inspiration. The

universality of ideas to which he is thus condemned is nothing but an abstract principle designed to assure the intellectual comfort of those who sit in the orchestra stalls.

If the communication of ideas does not take place in both directions, from artist to public and from public to artist, if there is no deep interaction between them, an intimate and ever-recurring communion, the writer tends to imprison himself in his own subjectivity and ends by struggling along in a context of arbitrary demands or in haughty rejection of the outside world. This retreat of the artist into himself prevents him both from expressing himself and from communicating. "Inward light", Chesterton wrote, "is the worst illumination" : pretending in this way to attain to serenity and universality, the artist can only deform both inward and outward reality.

Between this individualism which makes all communication of ideas impossible, and the tendency which would reduce the artist to the level of a propagandist, an instrument in the hands of ideologists, there is none the less a place for a truly popular art which will educate the public without demeaning it, and which will bring together truth and beauty, aesthetics and thought, feeling and action.

This was the art dreamed of and pursued by the great Spanish dramatist, *Fédérico Garcia Lorca*. It could not be better defined than in meditation on these words of the writer of *Yerma* :

The theatre is one of the most expressive and useful means of enlightening a country, and it is the barometer which records its greatness and its decline. A sensitive theatre, with all its branches well oriented, from tragedy to vaudeville, can change the sensibility of a people in a few years : and an effete theatre, where talons replace wings, can put a whole nation to sleep and make it commonplace.

The theatre is a school of tears and laughter, and a free rostrum where men can expose moral habits which have grown old or equivocal, and explain with living examples the eternal norms of man's heart and sentiments.

A people which does not give help and encouragement to its theatre is at least in its death agony, if not already dead. By the same token, the theatre which, through laughter or tears, does not register the heart beats of society and of

history, the drama of its races, the authentic colouring of its panorama and its spirit, deserves to be called, not the theatre, but rather a gaming room, or the place where people indulge in that hateful thing, "killing time".

The theatre and faith

It would seem that a Christian could extend Lorca's assertions within the perspective of faith and, if it has been given to him to be a man of the theatre, also regard the theatre as a free rostrum where Christians may manifest the reality of a transitory world and explain with living examples the eternal action of faith. Why would this be unacceptable? Does what we have said about the communication of ideas hold as well for the artist who would claim to give an account of his faith? In one sense, yes, but we must bear in mind the specific character of the Christian faith and its manifestations, and redouble our vigilance lest Christian art become a synonym for art offered at bargain prices.

In the first place, a Christian artist, great as may be the respect he bears for an art which he will never regard as a simple means of expression, cannot reduce his faith to an abstraction, since he owes his very existence to it, and because it gives sense to his life, no part of which falls outside the sovereignty of God. The person I call a Christian artist, or Christian writer, is the man who consciously recognizes the authority and the presence of Jesus Christ in his whole life and who is ready to submit his art to Him, indeed to glorify Him by it.

Faith helps at this point to elevate art, to exalt it, without, however, modifying either its demands or its themes. But faith tends also to communicate itself, to radiate. Woe to the Christian who is not an evangelist! Is there not a risk that this inward constraint will force artistic communication, give it such *élan* that the serenity of art will be compromised?

More than anyone else, the Christian desiring to communicate his faith will be threatened by the temptation which art excludes: simplification, and the schematization of propaganda, however disinterested it may be.

The theatre and evangelism

It seems pointless to deny that a particular type of Christian theatre has become discredited because of the good intentions of its promoters. And if even the designation "Christian" arouses some suspicion, a certain reserve, when it is applied to art, it is because too many works, which laid claim to being art, in fact served the exclusive aim of exalting faith or converting unbelievers.

It behoves us, even while we understand the excellent motives behind these pseudo-artistic efforts, to be remorseless critics of ourselves, for the so-called evangelistic theatre has become the hobby-horse of all young pastors, and a certain number of laymen, who are anxious to proclaim the Gospel to the modern world in a language open and comprehensible to all. And it is at this very point that the danger lies, for we run the risk of making a mistake in good conscience and falling into the trap of a new conformity in matters of evangelism.

Let me explain myself. Let us take a mixed group of young people, perhaps members of the S.C.M., a very pleasant lot moreover, full of dash, caught up in their Christian faith and burning to communicate to others what they have received themselves. And they decide to use drama as the most satisfactory means of addressing themselves to the masses and proclaiming Jesus Christ.

It is at this point that the drama (the one we would wish to avoid) begins : firstly, because they run the risk, in the absence of sufficient technical preparation, of descending to the worst type of amateurish performance, and, despite all their good intentions, of making a poor witness ; secondly, because they also run the risk of forgetting that one does not proclaim Jesus Christ in the same way as soap and shaving cream are advertised on the commercial radio.

Above all, the so-called evangelizing theatre must not become an alibi for a Church which, having failed in its ministry of preaching the Word of God as it walks humbly day by day beside the men of our time, resorts to fragmentary, improvised experiments for which it is not always ready to take the responsibility. If the Church itself sets limits, if it issues directives

to this evangelizing theatre on which it relies to make accessible and attractive a message which it is afraid to incarnate or to announce with sufficient power, it simply runs the risk of paralyzing the Christian theatre and switching it over on to a siding.

I repeat once more that it was right to react against the mystification of "art for art's sake", against the gratuitousness of an art which makes no bones about its contempt for all which comes within close range of the real condition of man. But if this reaction must move Christians to the opposite extreme, to what is called "involved art", the "involved theatre", I much fear that we may find ourselves in an impasse. Neither art nor the theatre are meant to be "involved", but rather the artist, who as a man, as a servant of Jesus Christ, must continually seek in his faith and in the preaching and doctrine of the Church a source of inspiration and spiritual direction. It is necessary for the Church continually to remind those who are working in the theatre and who wish to glorify their Lord thereby, of the precise demands of the Gospel; but I do not think that the Church may impose directives or limits on any form of art.

Does it follow from this that the theatre is unsuited to be a means of expression of the Christian faith? Certainly not. But it does follow from what has been said that we must redouble our vigilance and never give in to facility. The Christian artist who feels himself called to share his faith runs the risk of walling himself up in a mass of certainties, of resorting to the unconscious lie of apologetics, and, which is still more serious, of despising unbelief, of losing respect for the truth to which unbelief itself is a witness! But an artist who is conscious of the risks in which he is involved, who is possessed by a faith purged of fanaticism and sectarianism, and who, by the grace of God, gets beyond pharisaism and many another of faith's childhood maladies, may humbly and sincerely witness in the theatre to his faith.

Prophetic communication

It is even possible that this artist may carry out a real ministry, for communication through drama, if it does not properly belong to the domain of preaching, is related to prophetic communication.

A prophet is a man who in his own fashion — perhaps a little *avant-garde* — speaks from the wings, like a watchman. And I am struck as I open my Bible to see that the great prophets of Israel were in fact very often great actors : think of Jeremiah running through the streets of Jerusalem rigged out in a yoke, playing the drama of the exile ; of Isaiah, likewise going about in the strange trappings of a prisoner ; of Hosea, interpreting in his own private life the drama of the infidelity of the people of Israel and the eternal faithfulness of God ; of Ezekiel, miming his prophetic warnings without commentary before the exiled people. It would be wrong to think that these prophetic acts which fill the pages of the Old Testament are behind the times, merely survivals from the past, strange ecstatic gestures without any fundamental spiritual importance. All these symbolic dramas, which disconcert our carefulness and our bourgeois wisdom, are, on the contrary, in the full flood of the most authentic prophetic tradition. The prophet is precisely the man who has been given the mission of disconcerting the pillars of the Church and of society, of issuing a challenge to the people of Israel, of troubling and scandalizing anyone who settles down comfortably in his faith. And this mission is never a gratuitous game, a little passing fancy, an act of non-conformist revenge ; it is in the first place the prophet's submission to the divine will, to the Word of God. When this prophetic submission is complete, the power of the Holy Spirit becomes a power issuing in inventiveness. So the prophetic acts are no longer simply a dressing up of what was done or said long ago, but of what must be said and done at this moment in a specific social, political and economic context.

During the discussions we had at Bossey ¹, there was unanimous agreement among the delegates who were responsible in their churches for the relation of faith to the theatre on the statement made by one of them : "Our mission is not to get quick responses at any price, but rather to ask questions, to be a thorn in the side, perhaps even of our own churches." The cry of distress, burning problems bravely attacked, the anguished questioning of the theatre are, even if no reply is

¹ Conference on "Art and the Church", held at the Ecumenical Institute, near Geneva, April 17-22, 1953.

yet found to them, a better witness than half-baked answers and the happy endings of the conformists, which have nothing genuinely evangelical about them. For this reason, in spite of all the reservations we have to make, there is no incompatibility between the Christian profession of faith and communication through drama.

Christian universalism

But do not let us be too quick to speak of Christian art or a Christian theatre. I have a deep distrust of our mania for sticking labels on things and pigeon-holing everything which comes our way. Christian universalism, far from imprisoning art and causing it to withdraw within the bounds of a particular sort of language or esoteric themes, will broaden our field of investigation. This Christian universalism, purified of all oversimplified proselytism, has its place in dramatic art. It may even discover in this art a language proper to itself, and succeed in communicating itself while respecting the dramatic conventions. It is sufficient for it to call upon the marvellous poetic and "mythical" language common to all Christianity, or rather to all peoples who have been nourished in a biblical culture.

I am convinced that the great themes of the Old Covenant, the meaning of which sometimes eludes so many Christians today, would attain their fullness and intensity if once drama were to present them to us again for what they are: liturgical dramas. But if we wish to communicate their meaning through the theatre (and this concern is not only legitimate, but essential), let us not reduce their perspective to some sort of psychological tangle. Let us preserve the tragic and universal character which they have in the Bible.

I am thinking especially of *Abraham Sacrifiant* of Théodore de Bèze, which was rediscovered in the 'thirties by the Théophilens¹. They removed the vestiges of confessionalism from it (formerly the devil was robed in a monk's gown), and there remained, stark and bare, the great adventure of Abraham offering the son he loved in sacrifice to the God he loved. Here

¹ A literary society at the Sorbonne.

was a tragedy borrowing its characters and its theme from Christianity. It skirted none of the essentials of the Christian faith, but it really communicated them ; it expressed them with the economy and purity of the greatest art : it removed from this theme everything which might have been pressed into service as capable of producing an immediate effect.

P. A. Touchard, the French critic, has said that this tragedy by Théodore de Bèze was, despite its imperfections, a return in power of Aeschylus. And he added : "One could take comfort, even after the three centuries of practical silence which have followed classical tragedy, if one were sure that one day soon some poet haunted by Hellenic grandeur would discover the virgin field which lies waiting for Christian mythology." This would be in any case a return to origins, for a secular theatre was originally inconceivable. Are artists, Christian artists, called to give back to this art a dimension it seems to have lost ? That is another story.

As I come to the end of this discussion, too incomplete, I fear, to be able to reply satisfactorily to the multifarious questions raised by the subject "artistic communication", I observe a serious gap : I have said nothing about comedy, having remained throughout in the field of the drama. Do not conclude from this that I consider comedy a negligible quantity or an inferior form of dramatic art, nor that I am giving way to the austere tendencies which are said to be characteristic of Protestantism. On the contrary, I am so convinced of the necessity for comedy and for its liberating, purging influence (as Aristotle said), that it would not occur to me to dissuade a Christian artist from investigating it.

But one should always defend a thesis with a serious air ! So let me simply say to you in conclusion (putting the sting in the tail) that art and faith have at least this in common : that they lapse into intolerance and pretence, fanaticism or pharisaism, when they cease to be seasoned with humour. And humour, as someone much more able than I has already said, is but one of the names of love.

Writing an Industrial Play

KAY M. BAXTER

The Religious Drama Society of Great Britain was able in 1952 to realize a plan on which it had been working for several years, and to which many people had given thought and prayer. The plan was to launch and maintain a touring company of players to present plays with a Christian theme, and to present them at a higher standard of technical competence than can usually be achieved by amateur enterprises. For three seasons now this company, the New Pilgrims, has been on tour, appearing in many centres in England and Wales. The company consists of eight young professional actors and actresses under the direction of Miss Pamela Keily. Miss Keily herself is a professional actress, a member of the Religious Drama Society, who since 1945 had worked in Sheffield as a producer of religious plays, mainly under the auspices of the Sheffield Association of Christian Communities. Her unique experience and her personality made her the obvious leader for such a company, and her contacts in Sheffield made Sheffield the obvious starting point of the experiment which is the subject of this article. For writing an industrial play for this young company is a very small part of the venture in which the Society is engaged, and can only be of interest if seen in the wider context of the whole undertaking.

Not surprisingly, there is everywhere a dearth of religious plays of any quality, though many pious attempts somehow get into print. And of the few plays which have real merit, dramatic or spiritual, still fewer are suitable for performance by a young touring company such as the New Pilgrims. They need plays with small castes, yet not "star vehicles", plays capable of making an impact in spite of minimum staging or lighting equipment, plays which do not demand very high theatrical awareness or sophistication from their audience, and yet which will not soft-pedal or burke the scandal of the Cross. And perhaps most important of all, they need plays which are exciting, genuinely dramatic. If you're going to preach, what

you need is a sermon. If you're going to act, what you need is a play. This company needed and needs plays of many different kinds, suitable for the very varied audiences before whom they perform.

One kind of play, in particular, existed in 1952 only in the pipe-dreams of a few interested individuals.

One winter in Sheffield Miss Keily, greatly daring, had put on, in a steelworks, Philip Lamb's Old Testament verse play, *Go Down, Moses*. In spite of everyone's gloomy forecasts, the play had succeeded — the hard real quality of writing and production had gained attention from the factory audience. Members of the Industrial Mission in Sheffield believed that even more interest could be aroused if a play were forthcoming in which a theological point was discussed, not in terms of biblical history, but in terms of the lives of the audience who would watch the play.

But who would watch it? Would steelworkers go to a religious play? Could a theological point really be made through this medium? Would such a play not necessarily incur the criticisms recently levelled at a Moral Rearmament play which had been put on in the city, all seats free, but which had been written off by the men as "bosses' stuff", or as untrue to life as they knew it? How could one get at the religious viewpoint of the steelworker? Did he think on theological lines at all? If the Gospel is of universal application, how does it apply to industrial England 1952 in an industry with full employment? Finally, whom should we send and who would go for us?

The "feel" of the place

I went. I arrived in Sheffield on a hot July day, and spent a week there. I lodged with Sisters of the Wantage Community, who work on a large housing estate in the suburbs of Sheffield, and who introduced me to one or two families from whom I gleaned information about the home life of the factory operative. Otherwise I spent the week in four different steelworks by day, and in the evening attended meetings — all and any meetings that would give me the "feel" of the place. I did three in one evening — a parish meeting, a political meeting,

and a discussion group ! On Sunday I attended a parish communion at a new church, where the back of the church was full of prams, the chancel full of little boys, and the nave full of families of all sizes. At the west end (among the prams) a young cleric stood and read clear directions as to what to do next, so that the congregation should suffer no embarrassment from being left standing while everyone else knelt, and the parish breakfast after service was a tremendous affair of sausage and coffee and rolls-and-butter-and-gossip.

In the works themselves, I was introduced by the industrial chaplains, with the simple statement that I wanted to write a play about a factory and was collecting material. At first this, naturally, aroused some suspicion. But I was able to allay this — the men accepted me as genuinely anxious to learn, as clearly not a "boss's man", and as honestly enquiring so that the play I hoped to write shouldn't be too damagingly foolish.

One man asked me, "Why do you want to write a play about us ? Why not do one about your own kind of person ?" A fair question. But he nodded approval when I said that I was not happy about a world where different kinds of workers understood so little about each other's lives as he and I did, that I knew it was a bit of nerve on my part, but that I thought someone had got to try building a bridge across that gap in understanding. I believed writing plays was one way to bridge the gap, at least it was the only way *I* could try, but I knew I couldn't do a thing unless his side would play.

I never pretended for a moment that I was anything but what I am, a middle-aged university woman who happened to have had a wide experience of people of different sorts. The men were all remarkably patient and friendly. They pulled my leg and appreciated the fact that I knew when they were doing so. Of course they didn't talk to me as man to man, but they did talk to me as man to woman, and that was good enough for a start. I got the feel of the life, the heavy dangerous work, the constant presence of risk, the importance of having a mate you could depend on, the long-standing suspicion of anyone who might be a two-facer or a tool of the management, and the exasperation of the clever chaps, who want responsibility, at the inertia of those who don't, or won't, shoulder their share.

"T" other Shift"

I asked them questions which led them to tell me what angered them, what cheered them, what they admired and what they despised, how rows began, what (if anything) they told their wives about their work, what they did in their holidays, what happened when a mate got injured or sick, what they thought about the youngsters and the old hands, what made a good boss, what made a bad workman. What, above all, were the failings and shortcomings, sins and crimes, always blamed upon "the other shift". After a while, *T' other Shift* became such a password that it was unanimously chosen as the title of the play: "Lads'll all come an' see T'other Shift take the rap" was the opinion! But in the end the play showed neither shift taking the rap. It showed, or tried to show, the supernatural Root of the natural decency, heroism and loveliness of the ordinary chap, in a job full of hardships, and up against all the usual emissaries of the devil in the shape of self-seeking or hypocritical men bent on twisting a situation to their own advantage — creatures who are always with us, and whose mere presence in the community will, if not withstood, destroy the trust essential to spiritual growth. All this had, of course, to be expressed through action and reaction, not in "preaching lines". "For Gossake don't make him *talk* holy; make him *do* summat, luv", was counsel I was frequently given — counsel which made one realize yet again that, beautiful and impressive as is the Sermon on the Mount, it is by the Passion and the Resurrection that men are converted.

I set out on this visit with only one clear principle: it was a conviction that in the Gospels there are all the type-characters you find in life. Right. I would try to find in the factories one or two at least of the patterns of behaviour apparent in the Gospels. I didn't know what they would be: maybe something about vocation (Matthew at the receipt of customs), maybe something about temptation (Peter warming his cold hands), maybe the grief of a mother — I didn't know.

I found them all, of course, more or less. But the one I followed up was the Judas-theme. I found that the universal enemy was the betrayer, the traitor to the group, the man

willing to better himself at the cost of his friends. He was the universal enemy. The universal hero? The man whose part nobody wanted to play, the volunteer for the dirty job, the chap who always took the heavy end, the one you could trust to be first on the spot when the accident siren sounded — in short, the man prepared to lay down his life for a friend. Once the pattern had been matched with its Gospel prototype, it was comparatively easy to work out the story in terms of factory life: the plot wasn't too difficult to evolve, especially as the men told me dozens of stories, most of them very dramatic.

Difficulties — framework and language

There were two great difficulties, however. The first was framework. This play, we discovered, if it was to be seen by the majority, must be put on during the lunch break. That meant it mustn't run for a minute over half an hour. And it must be designed to be put on cold, without benefit of scenery, lighting, or any theatrical illusion. It must have a natural background of noise, and a story that wouldn't look silly played under the roof of a hangar where overhead cranes were at work, or up against great blocks of metal, or the red glare of furnace fires. And it must be acted by young actors playing the parts of factory workers right in the middle of an audience composed of the genuine article. We did, in the end, solve fairly satisfactorily all the questions of framework.

There remained the problem of language. The real language, though occasionally pithy and vivid, was often lifeless where it wasn't lurid. Coming out of the mouths of actors it would have offended — it did offend when we tried it out — the ears of the very people who used it habitually and unthinkingly. What was needed was a kind of stylized vernacular, and that was where a practised reporter had perhaps the advantage of other kinds of writers. Here I was lucky, for though I have a natural ear for vernaculars and had acquired a rough facility in the rhythms, metaphors, catchwords and technical jargon by the time I left Sheffield, I didn't deserve the stroke of luck which followed me. This was fourteen foolscap sheets of laborious penmanship from one of the men I'd met, who (ex-

plaining that if he wrote any more his missus would know he was barmy, whereas at present she just *thought* he was) had taken the trouble to put down on paper his musings upon his own life and work, interspersed with stories (by no means all suited to religious drama), and concluding with the signature,

Your well wisher,
The Unknown Willing Lad.

These sheets, couched in the slightly formalized style of someone unaccustomed to the written word but determined to be exact, formed a "source book" of unparalleled usefulness. Whenever I felt myself writing off key in my dialogue, I had only to read the Lad's pages again to put myself "bang on".

The play

I completed a draft of the play, journeyed again to Sheffield, and went through it with half a dozen of the men who had been most interested. Their comments were instructive, witty and kind, their corrections mostly points of detail. They were genuinely surprised at how much of what they'd told me had worked into the play, and felt a perfectly legitimate proprietary interest in it. The revised copy was then approved by the Religious Drama Society and by Miss Keily (whose advice had, of course, been central to all the previous work), and the company went into rehearsal. Rehearsal revealed, as was probable, a number of fresh snags:

'Bright is the ring of words when the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs when the singer sings them—'

Some of the lines that had rung true from a burly Sheffielder felt unnatural to the lad who had to try to portray him; a prologue or introductory speech had to be invented for this play before which no curtain could rise, and a final quatrain to clinch and close the performance. But in the end it was done — and the young company booked its first performance.

Their courage at this point in the venture is beyond praise. Their reception was, to say the least, doubtful. But the play went over. Photographs taken during performance show many expressions on the faces of the audience — but no-one was



bored. The sincerity of the playing, together with the fact that the play unmistakably held the mirror up to natures they recognized, held the crowd. It has now been performed in very many different settings, and hearing about it has sometimes made parish groups ask for a performance¹. I think it is true to say that parish groups simply hate it. I listened to it once in an audience of devout persons, and it was frightful. It only works in the kind of place for which it was written. There it comes sharply to life.

A bridge and a talking point

I think its value, in so far as one can ever estimate these things, has been in that very matter of establishing a bridge to which I referred earlier. The play makes a talking point. That's useless unless there are Christians about, able and willing to follow it up. But it does give Christians a hearing where no hearing was before — and any play of its sort will do the same, *if* it is the genuine article, if it rings true, and if it's exciting enough to hold the interest of people who attend speedway racing, cup finals and boxing championships. You cannot do it gently and prettily, nor allusively and "poetically". You can't do it if you think you (or any other Christians) know all the answers. But if you believe Christ to be for *everyone* Way, Truth and Life — rough Way, stark Truth and thrusting, vigorous Life, and if you're a professional writer prepared to make a fool of yourself trying to test that belief on a set of straight answers to straight questions, you'll learn a good deal yourself by trying to write a Christian play for industry. If in addition you can find a company brave enough to perform your play in factories, you may (perhaps, though you'll never know for sure) help a handful of people one step nearer the Way.

¹ The play is not published, nor is it intended for publication.

Christendom for Export ?

JOHN F. BUTLER

The central datum of Christian faith, the actual Good News of God in Christ, is emphatically and indubitably for export. God being what He is, and men being what they are, we cannot for a moment suppose that God was incarnate and died and rose again merely for some one group or class of men. If such a claim ever could have been made for any exclusive group of men, it was for the Jews, and that issue was settled in early New Testament times. If the stupendous affirmations of Christianity are true for anyone, they are true for everyone. But this does not mean that everyone yet knows them. For a series of historical reasons, it so happens that it is "the West" — that is, Europe and those areas elsewhere which have been solidly colonized from Europe — in which lies the strength of acceptance of Christianity, an almost complete absence of religious rivals to it, the long, stable tradition about it. In the West we have this Good News, but it was meant for everywhere ; so we export it — that is, we have our "missionaries". That attitude is linked to the centre of our faith.

True, one still finds local churches that support themselves quite lavishly, but are "not interested in missions" ; but that is a mere local deficiency of imagination and dereliction of duty. One still comes across letters in the press from business men abroad, who think of themselves as Christians but do not wish native life to be disintegrated by alien, puritanical and competing missions ; but this is partly a confusion of issues with side-issues and partly another break-down of imagination and duty. But these phenomena have their importance. They point to the fact that even inside the visible Church there are those who think of Christianity as simply the Western type of religion. Outside of the Church that notion is naturally more prevalent.

Now, if Christianity were the Western type of religion, the typically European sort of spirituality, then one could reasonably,

perhaps unanswerably, question whether it has any relevance to, say, Fiji. This is no mere invented hypothesis, or explication of vague Western attitudes : it is the actual and explicit position of Hinduism. The modern Hindu does believe that Christianity is just the Western form of religion, as he believes that all other religions are forms arising in and appropriate to various social groupings : that is why he both respects it in others and also rejects it for himself.

But the truth stands that Christianity is not the religious aspect of the West : it is the fact, acceptance and proclamation of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of God's Son for man's redemption. These things have no intrinsic connection with Western psychology or sociology : they are matters of history and of universality. No-one could really think that God would incarnate Himself for Westerners without regard to Asians or Africans, either neglecting them or working out a separate scheme of salvation for them. There can be no soteriological apartheid.

This is not to deny the equally historical fact that Christianity has special connections with the West : it is in the West that the facts of the Gospel have been preached, accepted, remembered and in part applied. But that does not mean that Western Christianity must not be missionary : on the contrary, it is the reason why Western Christianity must be missionary. If the universal by nature is not universal in fact, then it must be made universal in fact. Hence we cannot deny the mission without denying Christianity itself.

This is so about the mission, but there may yet be some validity in the criticisms made about particular "missions". A useful parallel can here be drawn between the mission and the Church. Just as one may believe that the Holy Catholic Church is in the mind and will of our Lord, and yet believe that it is sometimes right and even necessary to criticize certain actual Christian fellowships or some manifestations of them, so one may believe the mission itself to be indubitable, and yet believe that some aspects of missionary work may and must be criticized.

Many such criticisms are made ; of those which have validity in them, I think the kernel may be expressed thus : alongside

Christianity is Christendom ; we have exported Christianity, and that was right ; along with it we have exported Christendom ; were we right there ?

Christianity and Western culture

By "Christendom" I mean Christianity integrated into Western culture. Such a Christendom is a massive fact. By about the year 1100 the area of acceptance of the Christian religion had become more or less coterminous with the then Western world, the world which later expanded into our modern Western world. It had by then come to terms with the fairly homogeneous culture of that area, so that there was a general outlook, culture or way of life which may conveniently be called "Christendom".

Was this development in itself wrong ? Some Christians think so, or seem to think so. Some Barthian pronouncements seem to suggest that, in the thought of that school, the whole process of coming to terms with Hellenistic thought-forms and Roman organization-forms was one vast mistake, a betrayal of the pure Gospel, compromise in the bad sense of the word. The beginnings of the process are in the New Testament ; the climaxes of it are Hildebrand, Thomas Aquinas and Chartres cathedral ; the continuing product of it is Christendom : was it all a mistake ? Some would go so far on the other side as to speak of the process as an extension of the Incarnation. Which is right ?

For our purposes here we need only the rough beginnings of an answer to questions like that. Surely it is clear that Christendom can be distinguished from the Christianity out of which it grew. Surely it is also clear that some such development was inevitable. For Christianity must penetrate every part of life — it is not only the Timeless Truth and the One Incarnate Life ; it is the Way for all and the Life for all. Our actual Christendom may have its faults, may even be riddled with faults ; but some sort of Christendom there had to be. There is sense in asking what it is to be a Christian artist, a Christian scholar, a Christian statesman, a Christian family man, a Christian Englishman, German and so forth. Christianity has to come to terms with culture and society, simply because it claims the whole of life.

Judgment on Christendom

Christendom, then, is in some sense a necessary expression of Christianity. But (we must insist again) it is distinguishable from it. In particular, it is distinguishable as capable of being judged. We are entitled to judge Christendom, as we are not entitled to judge Christianity. If we accept God's revelation at all, we accept it by submission. We may indeed approach it critically and ask all sorts of questions about it ; but once we accept it, we have dropped our questions and have submitted. (Or, in so far as we have not, we have only partially accepted.) But when we thus submit to Christianity, we need not similarly accept Christendom, the ways in which man has tried to integrate the unchallengeable Word of God into his life, without further question.

Christendom is thus open to criticism, and it is open in two ways. It can be criticized (*a*) in itself, and (*b*) in its relation to other cultures.

(*a*) It can be criticized in itself, as an improper compromise between Christianity and the Western world. To repeat what has already been said : though some such integration of Christianity and its environment is unavoidable, mistakes may have occurred in the making of it. It would be superfluous to argue that such mistakes should not be exported ; they are not desirable even at home.

(*b*) Or Christendom, taken as it is in itself, can be criticized in relation to other cultures. That is to say, while we accept it, or accept it on the whole and modify it slowly, as proper for the West in which it arose, yet we may query its propriety or relevance elsewhere. That is, we may ask whether the integration of Christianity with Western culture is necessarily the proper integration of Christianity with other cultures. In other words, we have come round to our title question : is Christendom for export ?

Christendom was exported

History would seem to answer "yes", inasmuch as Christendom, since it came firmly into being, has continually tried to export itself. In Christianity's first period of expansion, roughly

between A.D. 30 and 1100, there was no export of Christendom, because Christendom was then only forming itself, being the amalgam of Christianity with non-Christian Greco-Roman forms, produced in the contacts of this first expansion. Then followed four centuries mainly of consolidation, and a century mainly of the strife of the Reformation. Then Christianity began to expand again : first, on the Roman Catholic side, in the great missionary movement associated with the Counter-Reformation ; and again (it is fascinating to speculate on the causes of the time-lag) on the Protestant side, in the nineteenth century. This second expansion was the first time when Christianity, in expanding, had the option either of taking a Christendom with it or of leaving it behind. It is a historical fact that it nearly always chose to take Christendom with it — or rather, for the most part assumed that it could not but do so. Christendom was exported.

True, there were exceptions. A few of these were deliberate, of set policy — the Chinese painting of Ricci and Castiglione ; the corresponding early Japanese Christian painting ; Père Six's Cathedral at Phat-Diem : other (and more frequent) cases were due to sheer facts of ecology, which compelled changes of building materials and therefore of techniques, or to sheer facts of isolation, which denied access to foreign craftsmen and foreign models — such cases are the fine indigenous or semi-indigenous Christian arts of the Congo crucifixes, and the churches and some of their decorations in Mexico, New Mexico, Arizona and California. (The architectural styles of the isolated churches of Travancore and Ethiopia, though of a much earlier time, are relevant to the study of this question ; and so are the few cases of back-influence by non-European cultures upon European ones, as in Spanish Plateresque and Portuguese Manoeline.) But these are rare exceptions, sharply unlike the usual policy or habit of the expanding churches. (Incidentally, one may note in passing, they are quite unlike the wide adaptability of Judaism, Islam and earlier Christianity.)

Such export of Christendom along with Christianity was indeed all but inevitable. For this period of the second great missionary movement coincides with the time of the great geographical and political expansion of the West, the great

intellectual advance in science which was associated with that expansion, and the self-confidence which was both cause and effect of that expansion and that advance. In the heady atmosphere of such a time, it was hardly to be expected that Western missionaries could pause to undertake the delicate task of disentangling Christianity from Christendom. They could hardly but assume that Christendom, the integration of Christianity with that successful and confident culture, was the one natural, right and necessary expression of Christianity.

So, when we ask, "Is Christendom for export?", we are partly trying to come to a judgment on something that has happened in the past. This will, of course, be a purely academic judgment, for the past is irreversible, and, even if condemned, will not be undone.

A new policy

But our question can also be looked on as a call to frame a policy for the present and the future — it is thus an active, practical, purposive question.

True, it cannot lead to a quite untrammelled policy. The irreversibility of the past affects not only the past, but the present and the future as well. Four hundred years of the export of Christendom cannot be altogether without lasting effects. For instance, some great buildings have been put up which will not easily be pulled down; science has introduced ways of life from the West which are not likely to be reversed; habits of Westernization have been ingrained into the minds of converts and have hardened into conservatism which will not easily be erased. The past is still with us in its effects, and we have to take account of them. Nevertheless, the present and the future are the present and the future and need not just repeat the past, though they cannot but be influenced by it. We can, if we judge it needful and right, frame a new policy now about the export of Christendom.

Such a new policy is indeed an urgent need, since the situation has now radically changed. Europe no longer has the self-confidence to desire the old type of lead, nor would it be allowed such a lead if it wanted it. Nationalisms have arisen,

and have attained power, outside Europe, culturally as well as politically. Non-Europeans now look very critically at Christendom. Outside of the Church, non-Europeans are no longer anxious or even willing to copy the West, except in certain matters of their own choosing ; inside the Church, at least in some places and in some age-groups, they are becoming equally critical. By way of response in Europe, or in some cases by way of spontaneous pioneering there, some mission leaders, notably in the Church of Rome, are inaugurating movements for the encouragement of indigenous art, for the "adaptation" of this indigenous art to Christian uses, and for the checking of the export of further European models in architecture, painting, music and other arts. So our question, "Is Christendom for export ?", is mainly a call to evaluate this movement.

Difficulties in use of indigenous art-forms

It is useless to deny that the export of Christendom has achieved some good. For what is the alternative ? It is the use of indigenous art-forms. But these art-forms are thoroughly Hindu, Buddhistic, Islamic, and so on, whereas Christendom is Christian — it once, indeed, had elements which were pagan, but they are fully assimilated now, and the old pagan meanings and associations have died away. All other integrations of Christianity with cultures must face the fact that these cultures are non-Christian and in a large degree anti-Christian. Outsiders often think that the firm attachment of converts to their inherited Western forms is mere unreasoning conservatism, and indeed its validity is generally very debatable ; but behind it there often lies a more delicate appreciation of this problem than is possible for the European — it is the convert who knows the subtleties of local symbolism, associations and pressures ; and the convert, being in his own country and with his own people, can never escape from these influences as the missionary, in the last resort, can. Thus it is the national Christians who have the final right to decide. But even the outsider can see some of the difficulties. For instance, how can the Christ, "the Word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword", be shown in sculpture in a style which has been formed

by its preoccupation with the Buddha in his *nirvana* ? African negro sculpture is what it is because it expresses certain ideas of the spirit-world ; can it therefore really be used for Christian subjects ? How can a Christian Eucharist appropriately be held in a building planned like a Hindu temple, which is not intended to house congregational worship at all ? Which is the indigenous style for Christian use in North India, where two separate indigenous styles exist side by side, with centuries of mutual antagonism suggested in them both ? These are just samples of the kind of difficulties which arise — missiological literature is full of them. They are all side-stepped if we use the forms of Western art, which are soaked in Christian tradition and are neutral in local disputes.

But this good is more than outbalanced by the harm done in Westernization. Christianity in the "mission" areas cannot avoid giving some offence by the mere fact that it comes from outside : the first preaching of it was by foreigners ; it cannot but oppose the local cults ; in various ways it must needs appear to be "the religion of the West". Need it emphasize this criticism, and even validate some part of it, by culturally denationalizing its converts ? Such denationalization puts barriers in the way of the Gospel's spread ; also, it sets up strains within the local Christians, which at the best mar their self-integration, and at the worst can make them serious social misfits. Man cannot but express himself in outer forms, he cannot but live in society ; and in these sides of his life, as in all sides, he is in need of wholeness. It will be tragic if Christianity, that Gospel of the salvation of the whole man, of his happy integration into the life of God and of his fellows, should be so presented as to break up the wholeness of life for millions of individual souls and, indeed, for many large communities.

It would be foolish to deny that the difficulties exist and are important. But they can be faced. They have been faced in art in the past. The classical Greeks wrested archaic Greek art to the service of a fuller humanism ; Christendom in turn made those humanistic forms express its own theoreticism — the development took time and involved mistakes, but in due course it came to pass. Today such problems are still being faced in other fields ; we have an almost exactly similar problem

about language. Most of the non-European languages are impregnated with non-Christian or anti-Christian ideas, and thus tremendous problems confront the Christian translator. How, for instance, can one properly translate "incarnation" into any Indian language, when all the obvious words are overshadowed by unhistorical concepts about Visnu's manifestations ? Or, which dialect of Hindi is to be treated as standard ? Such problems abound — but no-one ever suggests that we should dodge them by keeping to English or other Western languages. Even those churches which insist on their liturgy being in a dead language use the local tongue for teaching and preaching. The problems in the visual arts are no harder.

A great spiritual adventure

It is recognition of these needs, dangers and opportunities that has led to the modern movement of "adaptation" — of taking local cultures and using them for Christian ends, with more or less alteration. This movement was pioneered in 1923 by Archbishop (now Cardinal) Costantini, just after he had taken up his duties as Apostolic Delegate in China, in his famous letter, "The Universality of Christian Art". Now many of his communion, and of others, are experimenting in various types of adaptation. Dr. Daniel J. Fleming's series of books (*Heritage of Beauty; Each with his own Brush; Christian Symbols in a World Community*); the S.P.G.'s¹ picture-books (*The Life of Christ by Chinese Artists; Son of Man; In Parables*); the S.P.C.K.² book of Makerere pictures; Cardinal Costantini's book; the catalogues of the 1950 Vatican Exhibition and of Canon Paterson's travelling "Cyrene" Exhibitions — these are among the more accessible of the many illustrations of the products of this movement.

Of particular interest and importance in the movement is the work of the French Roman Catholic society, *Art et Louange*, which specializes in the application of the principles of adaptation to the production of cult-implements, especially the Eucharistic vessels. The society holds that that is where Christian indi-

¹ Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

² Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.

genous art ought to begin. For such work is within the scope of the village craftsman (who is the important type of artist to consider), whereas pictures and buildings may be as yet beyond him ; moreover, it immediately associates the village craftsman and the culture-patterns of the people, in an act of offering and dedication, with the very centre of Christian worship. Surely it is along such lines as these that the truest progress will come.

This whole movement is a fascinating one — it is a great spiritual adventure of our times. It is by no means at an end ; we are still in the phase of groping and mistakes. Some adaptations are crude, some scarcely Christian. For instance, the late Bishop Azariah's hotchpotch of church, mosque and temple which is the Cathedral at Dornakal was an interesting and worthy pioneering experiment, but is certainly not the full answer. Or take the much-publicized "Indian-Christian" pictures of Angelo da Fonseca and A. D. Thomas : their use of a weakened Ajanta-Tagore technique has resulted in pictures dripping with sentimentality and unhistoricalness — and what errors could be more dangerous in India ? Not all the difficulties have been overcome as yet.

Truly Christian and truly indigenous

A root cause of the troubles has been a tendency to think of adaptation in too static a way. To take a fixed Christian purpose or idea, and to slam on top of it some fixed type of indigenous decoration — no-one of real knowledge supposes for a moment that that is enough, though it is what we sometimes get. Even to take a Christian idea and clothe it thoroughly in the garb of a traditional non-Christian art is not enough : that way lie insuperable difficulties of new wine in old wine-skins ; Da Fonseca is then the best we can hope for. But this is a false approach, and it rests on a false premise — on a notion that art is a static thing which can form one fixed element in a sort of chemical compound with ideas. No, the true scientific analogies for art come not from chemistry but from biology. Art lives in the transition to novelty. Use of the well-worn will not suffice, because true art is never well-worn, but is

always new, even when it is "in a tradition". Does not this mean that there are adventurous possibilities here for Christian art, both as art and as an instrument of Christian evangelism ? The impact of the novelty of Christian ideas upon a local art conceived statically can be mere muddle and disturbance ; but if that art is conceived fluidly, as a developing thing, then that impact may be the needed impetus that will bring a real freshness into the local art simply as such. At the same time our churches will, through this fresh art, which will be both truly Christian and truly indigenous, come to more of a proper integration with their society, and so will bear a more effective witness. We may hope, too, for an enrichment of Christianity on the side not only of its art but also of its ideas ; and on the side of art we can hope not only for fine things abroad but for fruitful developments, touched off by such new things abroad, in the tired arts of the West. Our hope and endeavour, then, must be, not that some sort of amalgam or compromise can be come to, but that Christian themes and inspiration will touch off in the personalities of local artists (and, more important, local craftsmen) in the younger churches a creative advance into new forms of Christian art.

A pioneering task for the S.C.M.

Here, surely, is a special task for the S.C.M. At every stage, these problems are in the main problems for the craftsman and the artist ; the layman in such matters does well to tread warily. But they also need the cooperation of the theologian, of the kind of cultured Christian who can hold together in his mind the problems of art and of church thought and life, and of the ordinary church leader, who has responsibility for his church's worship and integration with society. It is, in short, a problem for the Christian intelligentsia — sensitive, informed, patriotic, yet raised above jingoistic clap-trap. Another field for S.C.M. pioneering !

Christian Culture in India

CHANDRAN DEVANESAN

The attainment of independence by India has resulted in a growing awareness of the problems of culture. There is a conscious effort on the part of the state to encourage both the preservation and development of various cultural forms from village art and folk dancing to Indian films. This rising tempo of cultural consciousness underlines the need for a cultural awakening within the Indian Church. There is a much quoted statement of D. T. Niles which expresses very succinctly the need for a cultural revival within the younger churches: "The Gospel is a seed that is sown in the soil of a culture. The plant bears the marks both of the seed and the soil. There is one Gospel; there are many Christianities. In Asian countries Christianity is a potted plant which needs to be rooted in the cultural soil of the East." The Church has been planted in the soil of India, but its roots must find their way down to the deeper levels and springs of the country's cultural life, if it is to be a truly Indian expression of a universal Christian faith. There have been a few signs of promise, a budding here and there, but as yet no real blossoming of Christian culture.

The importance of a Christian culture

There are various reasons why this need for a culture is of great importance to the Christian Church in India. Firstly, there is the whole fruitful field of the problem of communication. There has been a tendency in India to look at this problem too much in terms of theology and too little in terms of art. While it is of fundamental importance to find a language which conveys the meaning of Christian truth to the peoples of India, there are other forms of expression, particularly artistic expression, which need far more attention and encouragement than is normally given to them. India is a land of myth and symbolism. Hinduism has always had powerful means by which

its welter of mythologies are made to become part and parcel of the life of the people. The two great Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*, form the basis of practically every form of cultural expression. They get into the consciousness of the people through song and dance, mural painting and sculpture. Today they continue to be propagated through the radio and the films. Hindu symbols are part of the dress and adornment, the manners and customs of the people. How is the Christian story, the drama of the Gospel, portrayed? Hitherto it was largely a matter of the spoken and the written word, but there are now signs of a growing interest in other methods and cultural forms by which it could be expressed. It is becoming widely recognized that the visual and plastic arts provide powerful media for the communication of the Gospel. A small beginning has been made even with films and filmstrips.

Secondly, the problem of culture is important because of the fact that the Indian Church is a rural church. India is a largely illiterate country, but this does not mean that there is no rural culture. On the contrary, we are beginning to discover how much there is in the form of a traditional rural culture. This culture is conveyed not so much by the spoken word as by song and dance and village arts and crafts. We are discovering how the preservation and development of the folk arts can be a vehicle for the communication of the Gospel.

Thirdly, the problem of culture is related to the problems of worship. How can Christian worship become more meaningful by becoming harmonized with the cultural environment and the traditional ways in which men have worshipped and praised God? This is particularly relevant in churches where there is a liturgical tradition. The liturgy of the Church of Ceylon is very interesting from this point of view. It is made up of familiar Sinhalese tunes sung by carters and labourers on the roads and in the fields, while some of the chants are based on the chants of Buddhism. It is also a problem related to church architecture, whether of village or urban churches. The cathedral at Dornakal, the chapel at Trinity College, Kandy, and the Christukula Ashram, Tirupattur, are all examples of the attempt to build along the lines of local architecture.

Further, it is through architecture that various Indian motifs and their symbolic meaning can be incorporated. The lotus and the banana tree motifs, for example, can be seen on the stone pillars of Dornakal cathedral, the lotus symbolizing the purity of Christ and the banana tree His resurrection.

The difficulties in creating a Christian culture

The need for the full development of Christian culture in India is obvious, but the difficulties in the way of creating such a culture have been very great. Firstly, the cultural heritage of India is a religious heritage which can be traced to the influence of the three great religions which have flourished in the country — Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. There are tremendous monuments in rock and stone, brick and marble, bronze and brass, which speak of the greatness and the achievements of these three religious cultures. The impress of these religions is felt in every field of culture, be it literature or architecture, music or painting. By comparison the Christian contribution appears pitifully meagre. What can the Christian point to which he can claim has become part of the Indian cultural heritage ?

Secondly, there has been no "Christian period" in Indian history, comparable to the Hindu or Muslim period, which has left behind the sediment or continuing tradition of its culture. The British period cannot be called a "Christian" period of Indian history : it represents rather the impact of a scientific, technological, capitalistic civilization on India. It was the impact of a vigorous, secular culture on the old, decaying religious cultures of India, partly destroying and partly revivifying them. The main achievement of the British period was the laying of the foundations for a modern, secular state in India. Had a Western power in the Middle Ages, or even the Portugese in the sixteenth century, conquered the country, the story of Christian culture in India would have been different. Whether it would have been desirable is, of course, a different question !

The third difficulty is represented by the transitional period through which Indian culture is passing today. Secularism has

made inroads into the old religious cultures. It is true that the tycoons of the Indian film industry still produce extravagant mythological stories, but whether they are really concerned about the box office or religious values is an open question. The young Indian writer or painter of today does not confine himself to an exclusively religious framework. On the contrary, he is challenged to espouse secular ideals like nationalism or communism. Will the old religious culture of India disintegrate under the pressure of a growing, industrialized civilization? To a great extent the traditional religious cultures have been preserved because of the illiteracy and village economy of India. What will happen as education spreads, city life becomes more diffused, and industrial civilization enfolds the land? There is a growing inner contradiction which some day must make itself felt much more sharply. The tension between the forces of religion and secularism is there, but it has not yet come to a head. The middle-class intelligentsia, who would like to see Indian culture evolve self-consciously, are torn between traditionalism and liberalism. They are fearful of "Westernization" lest it destroy traditional Indian values, but they are also conscious that many of these values stand in the way of progress. And so Indian culture is caught on the horns of a dilemma.

The role of the Church

There is a further set of difficulties, inherent in the nature of the Christian Church itself, which have hindered the development of Christian art. Firstly, Christian culture can never be exclusively or completely Indian because of its more universal character. But Hinduism quite naturally considers itself to be the national religion because it arose from the soil of India. Hence there is a problem of making Christianity, so to speak, part of the soil. The Catholics have done this in some measure by establishing shrines and centres of pilgrimage particularly in localities where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared. In this way some spots in India have become hallowed ground for them. Since the Protestant seldom sees visions of any kind, he is in a more difficult position! Secondly,

Christianity in India has suffered sometimes from the puritanism of some Western churches and their attitude to art forms. Even today the suggestion that the life of Christ should be portrayed through Indian dancing would cause an uproar in many places. And yet Indian dancing of all schools has been one of the most powerful means for the conservation of the mythology of Hinduism. The Catholic Church has not suffered from a puritan attitude to art, and it is not surprising that a number of Christian artists come from Goa, which is one of their strongholds. But it is only recently that even the Catholic Church has begun to encourage Indian artists instead of importing Italian artists and marbles and cheap Italian prints. A third difficulty is represented by the fact that we probably think too much in terms of the instrumentality of culture, instead of desiring it as something valuable in itself and a gift from God. We seem to imagine that we can produce Christian painters and writers by holding endless conferences and committee meetings. Some more creative methods need to be found whereby artistic talent can be discovered and encouraged.

The Student Christian Movement in India certainly has a responsibility in this connection. Something has been done to encourage the writing of plays for students, and religious drama is being popularized. But a great deal more needs to be done to enrich the cultural life of university students. The learning imparted, even in some of our best Christian institutions, is a very meagre diet as far as art or culture is concerned. We pay tribute to the magazine of the British S.C.M. for the interest it has stimulated in Christian art.

There are a few artists and men of letters (especially in the Indian languages) in the Christian community in India, but they require far more recognition and understanding. The influence of Bossey¹ has travelled to India, and the inspiration of the Laymen's Movement has resulted in the holding of conferences for Christian writers, particularly in Andhra and Tamilnad. But the problem goes deeper. The Church must understand both the psychological and economic needs of the

¹ The Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, near Geneva, Switzerland.

artist. We employ a great many pastors, teachers and evangelists, but the idea of employing a writer just to write or a painter just to paint is still very alien. Do we need a Christian cultural centre in India, a kind of Christian Shantineketan¹ (without too many rules and regulations!) to inspire creative effort? The worldly-wise would probably consider it a luxury and a waste of the Church's money. But perhaps in the long run the writers and poets and painters will speak of Christ with a depth of feeling and sincerity which will capture the heart and mind of India.

¹ An Indian cultural university started by the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, in Bengal.

A Bibliography

MARVIN HALVERSON

The search for symbols

In a recent collection of his essays, *The Open Night* (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1952), John Lehmann, the English poet and critic, states that contemporary art and literature disclose an intense search for the myth in the heritage of the past and in new disclosures of the present. "The reason for this return to the kind of art that conceals a metaphysical meaning behind and above what it states, is surely not far to seek." Although many are still sustained by the Christian religion and its symbols, the hold has been weakened. But its replacement by other ideologies has not satisfied the artist, for "life . . . is more complex and more mysterious than the textbooks of progress ever told us, and we look round for symbols that shall recreate faith within the enlarged circumference of this new awareness. Such a moment is Christianity's opportunity. . . . And yet, for wide masses of people the Christian symbols as they have known them have ceased to be significant, and their desperate need is to find new symbols — even if these symbols should lead us back to a rediscovery of the central meaning of Christianity, restored through the discarding of outworn and corrupted images, and irrelevant secretions of ideas."

Such a search characterizes much of the imaginative literature and the other arts of our time. In the United States the New Critics have helped, by means of their scrutiny of internal structure in literature, to disclose the basic and often hidden assumptions of an author. Thus there has emerged in the United States a large body of literary criticism which is deeply aware of philosophical and theological motifs in the literature of the past as well as that of today. Not specifically Christian, this approach to literary criticism will none the less assist a more explicit theological assessment.

In such books as *The Well Wrought Urn* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1939), and *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1947), Cleanth Brooks, perhaps the leading figure among the New Critics, examines poetry, not with an intent to make an ethical or religious evaluation, but by examining the structure of the verse and a close reading of the text to enable the reader to enter into the poet's experience which is formed and consolidated in poetic structure. Brooks, an active churchman, is but one of several university professors in the United States who derives much of his method of literary analysis from T. S. Eliot. From the theological community little assistance has come.

Theological assessment

An interesting exception to the disinterest in matters of literature and the arts among theologians was P. T. Forsyth, the English Congregationalist, whose chief works were written during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In *Religion and Recent Art* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1905), and *Christ on Parnassus — Lectures on Art, Ethics and Theology* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1911), Forsyth attempted a theological assessment, with Hegelian philosophical tools, of painting, sculpture and music. While these books are inadequate in terms of methods of analysis and an understanding of art history, they are still remarkable in that they represent one of the few attempts by a Protestant theologian to reckon with the problems of art and Christianity. *Christ on Parnassus* was, he said, "an attempt to commend... the principle that religion, and especially Christianity, if real and deep, affects the whole man and the whole society", and "a Gospel which saves society must also save its culture". Forsyth makes the assertion that "the National Gallery (London) represents an interest as integral to the Church in its own way as the National Parliament".

In our own day, Paul Tillich has helped to develop a concern for the religious meanings in art by occasional lectures, articles and certain sections of *The Protestant Era* and *The Courage to Be*. The situation with respect to Tillich's thinking about art

and religion is illustrative of the lack of a Protestant literature in this field. Some of Tillich's remarkable essays on the religious significance of architecture and of contemporary painting date from pre-Hitler Germany. But this rich body of material has never been assembled in a comprehensive collection.

Creativity

In contrast, present-day Roman Catholicism has the writing of Maritain to inform its thinking. Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism* (Sheed and Ward, New York, 1920) was a systematic analysis based upon Aristotelian and Thomistic premises. But the crown of Maritain's thinking appears in his new book, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. Published in 1953 (Pantheon Books, New York), it has now appeared as a paper back (Meridian Books, New York, 1955), not only obtaining a wide circulation, but suggestive of the breadth of its appeal. The comprehensiveness of this work is such that a summary is impossible. One has the impression that, while remaining within Thomistic categories, with the exception of what he considers a justifiable extension of *transcendentalia* to include *pulchrum*, Maritain transcends these categories and the concerns of contemporary aesthetics as he deals with the interiority of artistic creativity. His closely reasoned exposition of the process of creativity asserts that art originates in "that inter-communion between the inner being of the human Self which is a kind of divination". Furthermore, it is a distinction that in art the creativity of the spirit is free, the only "end" of art being beauty, not as sensibly perceived, but in a transcendent relationship of intellect and sensible beauty.

Undoubtedly, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* is a work with which all of us must reckon. I believe it is a work in terms of which a Protestant (and corrective) statement of artistic creativity must be made. While no extensive explication of Protestant principles in this area of man's life exists, attention must be called to what is suggestive of a line of possible development. Denis de Rougemont, in a paper read at the conference on "Christianity and Art" at the Ecumenical Institute in 1950, and since published in *Spiritual Problems in Contemporary*

Literature (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952), sets forth the danger of an inadequate doctrine of man and his "creativity". The temptation of poets to conceive of themselves, in Shelley's words, as the "unacknowledged legislators of the world", is averted only as it is recognized that :

Art is an exercise of the whole being of man, not to compete with God, but to coincide better with the order of Creation, to love it better, and to reestablish ourselves in it. Thus art would appear to be like an invocation (more often than not unconscious) to the lost harmony, like a prayer (more often than not confused) corresponding to the second petition of the Lord's prayer — "Thy Kingdom Come".

Communication and symbolism

Communication in a world of broken or empty symbols is one of the problems which preoccupies the reflective artist. The cultural situation is such that the artist appears to have withdrawn into ever smaller areas of intelligibility. In another paper, *A Common Language*, de Rougemont shows the involvement of the Church in the cultural confusion and the abridgement of communication. While this essay deals with the role of the liturgy in refining and defining the language of the Church's message, its implications for the recovery of common symbols are crucial for the artist. A recent collection of lectures, *Religious Symbolism* (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1955), points up the problem for religion and the arts in our day. Two essays in particular are relevant to the central problem of communication for the artist and for the Church. Paul Tillich's chapter, "Theology and Symbolism", deals primarily with the nature of the religious symbol as "material taken out of the world of finite things, to point beyond itself to the ground of being and meaning, to being itself and meaning itself". The symbol actually participates in the power of that which it symbolizes. In addition it is the function of symbols "to open up levels of reality which are otherwise closed, and to open up levels of the human mind of which we otherwise are not aware". Because the religious symbol participates in the holiness to which it points, it is subject to the danger of

literalism, making necessary a Protestant judgment on symbols. Symbols are not holy in themselves. Tillich's premises and pattern of development have proven highly suggestive to members of the theological community and to persons in the arts as well.

Drawing upon Tillich's insights, but not determined by them, is Stanley Romaine Hooper's essay in the same volume on "The Future of Religious Symbolism — a Protestant View". In this chapter the relevance of a truly Protestant principle to contemporary art and literature is developed briefly, but cogently and incisively. "Protestant forms and symbols must take their foothold in a present situation; they must represent what the existentialist calls engagement." While there may be such a thing as "Catholic art", the notion of a "Protestant art" is a contradiction in terms. "For the Protestant principle aims not to make art but to make men who as Christians are artists."

"Engagement"

The theme of "engagement" is treated in other chapters in *Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature* and *Religious Symbolism*. (Both volumes are based on lectures sponsored by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, in which Jewish, Roman Catholic and Protestant viewpoints are stated.) The Protestant awareness of "engagement" among serious artists of our time is represented in a chapter of the second volume, "Religious Symbolism in Contemporary Literature", by Nathan Scott. He suggests that the group of writers whose Christian position possibly affords a body of iconological material in imaginative literature is a minority. The larger group of writers who have not made a creedal commitment constitutes an area of highly significant exploration. Their "engagement" is not in conventional Christian terms, but their writing affords a significant insight into the human situation. In his book, *Rehearsals of Discomposure* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1952), Nathan Scott examines the writing of Kafka, Silone, D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot. The themes of estrangement, alienation and guilt are the index of man's situation. In Silone and

Eliot, he suggests, are intimations that man's situation is open to renewal.

Amos Wilder, in *The Spiritual Aspects of the New Poetry* (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1940), was one of the first explicit Christians to indicate the confrontation of the contemporary poet with the dislocations of our times. Wilder has continued this exploration in *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition* (Scribners, New York, 1952), and by these volumes has extended the understanding of what the best voices in imaginative literature disclose in terms of estrangement, judgment and renewal. The range of his theological perceptions and the depth of his penetration into the poet's work make his work a major contribution to Christianity and culture.

Christianity and literature

From England has come a succession of books which for the most part do not have an equal scope of critical inquiry. However, they have contributed greatly to the emerging body of thinking about Christianity and literature. Norman Nicholson, the English poet, in *Man and Literature* (S.C.M. Press, London, 1943), employs an interesting typology, assessing writing of the past fifty years in terms of the implied doctrines of man. He believes that the presuppositions of Liberal Man inform the work of Shaw, Galsworthy and Wells. Under Natural Man, man in a state of innocence, he places Lawrence, Hemingway and Faulkner, and within the framework of Imperfect Man he examines Joyce, Kafka, Greene and Eliot. Their understanding of man as imperfect implies an original state or relationship which man has lost. While this approach is highly suggestive, it is difficult to categorize certain writers with ease.

Studies in Literature and Belief (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1954), is the work of Martin Jarrett-Kerr, C.R.¹, whose *D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence* (Philosophical Library, New York, 1951)², adds to a growing reassessment of Lawrence as a writer in revolt, but never to be understood except

¹ See page 199 for review of this book.

² Reviewed in *The Student World*, II, 1953, p. 204.

as a religious writer. In his most recent book Father Jarrett-Kerr deals with literature from the viewpoint of an Anglo-Catholicism which has reckoned with the implications of existentialism.

To this list must be added George Every's *Poetry and Personal Responsibility* (S.C.M. Press, London, 1949), which is a highly useful survey of the literary situation. Its comprehensiveness may suffer from its brevity, but it could serve as a good introduction to this new encounter between religion and literature.

Drama

While much of this critical material deals with drama, two important specific contributions should be mentioned. Francis Fergusson in *The Idea of a Theater* (Doubleday Anchor Books, New York, 1953) combines a vast erudition with a historical and theological sense. The conceptual scheme of this book embraces the entire range of dramatic literature, particularly those plays which "offer a way of comprehending (short of actually solving) the tragic issues of our sceptical and divided age". With it should be read an essay by Preston Roberts from *The Journal of Religion* (University of Chicago Press, 1951, obtainable as a pamphlet reprint) entitled "A Christian Theory of Dramatic Tragedy". In this essay Roberts seeks to transform Aristototele's *Poetics* in terms of "the differing, and I think, more searching premises of Christian theology and on the basis of... a body of Christian literature: the Gospels, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Lost*, Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*, Melville's *Billy Budd* and Dostoevski's *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Idiot*". Roberts believes that the Christian fact of forgiveness and new life qualifies our understanding of tragedy, making a uniquely Christian tragedy a necessary consequence. Much literary criticism deals with the theme of alienation, but this important essay introduces distinctly Christian categories of experience and belief. It is an essential element in the development of a Christian aesthetic.

Christianity and art

Perhaps because we in the United States still live in a culture strongly influenced by Protestantism, most of the critical works arising from a Christian consciousness deal with literature. There are evidences that churchmen are increasingly concerned, however, with visual symbols as well as verbal symbols. In the United States the remarkable growth in museums and the publication of reproductions of art has extended visual experience beyond what was possible a few decades ago. While some object to the inadequacy of colour reproductions, the series of volumes issued by Skira in Switzerland has enabled one to encounter a remarkable range of Christian art. The recent volume, *Byzantine Painting*, makes available the emphases of Eastern Christianity in contrast to the depiction of the humiliated Christ of the West.

The Voices of Silence (Doubleday, New York, 1953) by André Malraux is a work which demands attention for its greatness and its weakness. Malraux is not a Christian, and for him art becomes virtually a new religion, as the incantatory nature of his writing and his intuitive responses make evident. The breadth of his art interests and the deep humanism of his approach make this work most appealing. While he does not make a religion of art, he holds a religion of man of which art is the highest expression. The museum without walls (art reproductions) makes the symbols of this religion available to all, and the museums themselves become the sanctuaries of a religion of man. I think Malraux's work makes clear the necessity of an adequate doctrine of man.

Although it is lacking in adequate theological understanding, *Portraits of Christ* (King Penguin Books, London, 1941, text by Ernest Kitzinger and Elisabeth Senior) is a unique attempt in a small compass to show the changing modes of depicting Christ in art. The accommodation of these representations to changes in culture and altering apprehensions of religious reality which are described make this slender book thought-provoking.

Rembrandt et la Bible by W. A. Visser 't Hooft is such a striking example of biblical and theological insight combined

with art history that its translation into English is to be urged. While Rembrandt has been considered possibly the greatest Protestant artist, Visser 't Hooft makes evident the transformation in Rembrandt's style after his encounter with the Bible. Following his discovery of the revelation of God *e contrario*, Rembrandt ceased to depict Christ in the baroque manner, not to adopt a humanism, as too often thought, but rather to suggest the hiddenness of God's revelation in Christ.

Another volume in art, which deals with all the arts as well, is *The Dilemma of the Arts* (S.C.M. Press, London, 1948) by Wladimir Weidlé. A member of the Russian Orthodox community in Paris, Weidlé perceives the loneliness and agony in modern art which deprives it of strength and continuity, since the communal sustenance of faith has been lost. The restoration of the arts will come only in a renewal of faith.

Christianity and culture

The restoration of faith is not a private matter, for it concerns the confrontation of a total culture by Christianity. Significantly it has been persons concerned with architecture (the most social of all the arts) who have sensed the dislocations of man's life and its reflection in the arts, and the need for an understanding of the organic nature of life. Lewis Mumford in the United States has written a succession of books which constitutes a morphology of culture: *Sticks and Stones, Technics and Civilization*, *The Culture of Cities* and most recently *Art and Technics* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1952). In this volume of lectures, Mumford contends that man was a symbol-maker before he was a tool-maker. We live in a society which emphasizes man as a tool-maker. It is only as the God-given dimension of man as symbol-maker is brought into organic relationship with his technology that man's fullness is attained and society made whole.

Ernst Mundt, trained as an architect, has produced an interesting treatment of the fundamental unity of prior cultures whose expressions in all the arts disclose such a unity (*Art, Form and Civilization*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1952). Art, which is the traditional vehicle for communicating

unitary experiences, now lacks a common language. "Art as a whole is still rather incoherent, which betrays the incoherence of form in the basic issues of social existence." Form in our social existence will come, Mundt believes, only as the religious basis of life is recognized and accepted. "In Christianity, Western man possesses the formulation of a way of life that, by embracing both his finiteness as an individual and his infiniteness as a child of God, unites his polarities and makes consummate integration possible."

Out of these issues and out of such renewal Christian discrimination can arise. Brother George Every in *Christian Discrimination* (Christian News-Letter Books, London, 1940) gets to the point quickly. The state of taste in our homes, in public buildings and in our churches says what we believe regarding life. Our failures in Christian discrimination are a part of the disfigurement of the times. The task of renewal in the arts begins with oneself, as a person who is a member of the Christian community. To live an integrated life so that one's eating, drinking, reading, listening and seeing joy in the original and the destined order of God's creation, is to commence renewal of the arts and the redemption of society.

NORTH AMERICAN TRAVEL DIARY

LEILA GILES

In the plane from Shannon I found myself sitting next to a charming medical student from the University of Chicago, who had just paid his first visit to Europe. Having spent three-quarters of his time, and half his money, he had decided to cut his visit short and return the following summer ! Both being strangers to Europe, we exchanged our impressions.

After an early morning landing for breakfast at a Canadian airport, we arrived at Idlewild at four a.m., and stepped out into the damp and enervating heat which was to accompany us through the summer. Two French ladies who, with streaming brows, preceded me through the customs, were in the grip of something very akin to terror as they contemplated what they could expect by midday if this were the temperature at four in the morning !

When, just three months later, I flew back to New York from Tennessee, I was treated, late in the evening, to the glittering panorama of lights and the formidable outlines of skyscrapers against the sky which many a photograph and poster had led one to expect. At that time, too, as I walked up Fifth Avenue with Roger Blanchard, I became acquainted with the dignity and "weight" of New York, which, on this first encounter, I missed. As I now drove, cooled and comfortable, in the airways bus to La Guardia airport, I was confronted, in the early hours of Sunday morning, by a city which looked very much like the "morning after the night before" : untidy, deserted streets, torn newspapers lying in the gutters, and little shops with Saturday's bargains still painted on the windows. As one looked up, one saw veritable forests of television antennae on block after solid block of apartment buildings, and, below, armies of vividly coloured modern cars parked along streets in every inch of available space.

While I was in the United States, I did not ever quite succeed in getting a satisfactory answer to the question, "What happens to the old cars ?" To someone coming from Europe (or Australia !) it seems impossible that there should be not only so many cars, but so many new ones. After a while, one comes to expect to be translated from point to point in a gleaming modern monster, and to share the American contempt for traversing two or three blocks on

foot! In some university towns students are not allowed, unless for special reasons, to bring their cars with them, because of insurmountable parking and traffic problems. (But one's notions of "wealth" and "need" are turned upside down when one learns that a very large proportion of these same students are working their way through college.) Be that as it may, the visitor who is tempted to sniff at such super-mobility needs to be driven only once in the shining procession going in or out of Chicago by the Outer Drive in order to realize that he has entered upon a new order of existence!

First impressions

Yes, on entry into New York one realizes that one is in contact with something really "colossal". Even as one sits at breakfast in La Guardia watching aircraft land and take off almost every minute, one sips one's orange juice a shade faster, and pulls oneself together for the fray which one feels to be approaching. One is struck by contrasts: the sensation of being caught up in a highly efficient, impersonal machine, and at the same time the warmth and friendliness of the waitress or the baggage clerk, or the person sitting on the other side of the table who suddenly begins to meditate aloud on what he has just read in his newspaper. An old lady from Indiana who sat next to me in the plane had told me all she had done in the last year, written down my name and address, and given me the names of two of her friends, before we had been an hour in the air! She was also the first person in whom I encountered what one might call — using the words in their full natural sense without any positive or negative overtones — the popular piety of the United States. I had in my hand a copy of Canon Milford's *Foolishness to the Greeks*. It was this which attracted her attention. She recognized the biblical quotation, asked to see the inside of the book, and inquired with great interest about my work. My inward start of surprise revealed to me the fact of my own more secularized background. In the United States, religion is still respectable.

I caught my first (and last) glimpse of Canada as we flew west along Lake Erie, and felt for the first time since leaving Australia the thrill of uninhabited space and distance. Soon, however, the waters of Lake Michigan were beneath us, and we descended upon Chicago. By evening I was again many miles westward, and was able to greet with joy long-absent colleagues and friends, who were gathered in Monmouth College, Illinois, for the meeting of the

Federation Executive, and the Missionary Strategy and University Consultations.

The story of these meetings has been told and written elsewhere, as has that of the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which followed a fortnight later. I was able to attend some of the sessions of the Assembly, though during that time my chief responsibility was to take part in the Federation and U.S.C.C. conferences, which were meeting in Evanston, as it were "under the shadow" of the Assembly.

Differences and division

This was my first real contact with American students. I am not going to be bold, or foolish, enough to make a generalization about them! That is, indeed, something one soon finds to be impossible. I began to appreciate, on a superficial level, accents from different parts of the country, and had time to recover from the initial fright I received when, after begging her pardon twice, I still failed to understand the question of a young lady from Georgia whom I met on the first day in the conference sitting room! But the differences run much deeper than that: and, in the context of the United Student Christian Council, those of which one is most conscious are the ones between the different Christian Movements in the universities and colleges. In addition to the pioneer bodies, the Student Volunteer Movement and the student departments of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A., there are ten groups which work together in the U.S.C.C. The Student Christian Movement in the United States is said, by the Americans themselves, to be "emergent". It was a fascinating experience to be the chairman of a commission at this student conference in Evanston, to find oneself in the role of assistant at the birth of a group becoming conscious of its differences. One of the things the U.S.C.C. has to do before it can help Christian students to see that, and why, they must work together, is to get them to grasp how serious are the differences which divide them. These are not fully understood. When, later on, I visited a number of campuses, I often found that the relation between the various Christian groups was — to borrow a term from another place! — one of "peaceful co-existence". Where there was division, it was often not on the basis of essentials.

On this account I should say that one of the best things that happened in Evanston was the disturbance and discussion into which the whole student conference was finally drawn as a result of a request that a communion service for the whole conference

should be held. After a number of discussions in the steering committee, a public discussion was held, in which we plunged into the prickly forest of denominational differences, in which many of us learned for the first time that our divisions were sin. It was in many ways the deepest moment of the conference as, with our battered preconceptions and bruised pride and our easy solutions, we slowly came to a realization of our common helplessness, and a deeper understanding than we had had before of the reason why the Assembly of the World Council of Churches was going on in the McGaw Hall half a mile away. We wanted to be together, and could not. And yet, in another sense, we were. For many of us, the U.S.C.C. had been the means of our realizing those three facts for the first time.

I shall not be able to think of Evanston, however, without remembering, as well, midnight swims in Lake Michigan, and being introduced to "banana splits" at "The Huddle", with baseball heroes looking down from the wall, and the Archbishop of Canterbury in full purple round the corner at the next table — eating a banana split too?

Museum on a farm

If, in the presence of a certain number of overseas visitors to the United States, you breathe the words, "Orleton Farms", you will see a nostalgic light begin to burn in their eyes, and they will become at once eager to exchange reminiscences! To this venerated spot I drove during an afternoon and a day with Louise Gehan, Associate Secretary of the Protestant Episcopal Student Movement, over superb highways, alternately through towns and miles of cornfields, to attend an Executive Meeting of the National Canterbury Association. Here, in the midst of a thriving mixed farm, we enjoyed the lavish hospitality of Miss Mary Johnson. We sat in a long drawing room with original works of Chagall, Matisse, Picasso, Rouault looking down upon us, studied John 13 and discussed Christian strategy in the universities. A dazzling red rooster of Chagall became inextricably bound up in my mind with questions of ecumenical policy! This was the first occasion, in some ten years of association with the S.C.M., that I had attended a Christian student conference at which none but my fellow Anglicans were present. As we worshipped each morning and evening in Miss Johnson's beautiful little chapel, I began to understand, on the one hand, the richness of a student Christian community to which the full ministry of the Church in Word and Sacrament is available

on the other, I realized the tragedy of having to pay for this the price of a strong denominational consciousness. The denominational Movements of the United States, closely connected as they are to their churches, bring with them the fullness of their church life, but pay the price of working among students in the name of that church.

One can rarely say, "Lo, here!" and "Lo, there!", but it takes little imagination in order to be thrilled, as I was again and again during my visit, and not least at Orleton Farms, by the awareness of something which, under God, is happening among the Christian students of the United States. Something — one should perhaps say Someone — is moving there among these open, eager people. The call to unity is listened to with interest; questions are asked; and the age-old reaction comes, "What then shall we do?" One comes away full of hope.

The U.S.C.C. Assembly would need a whole volume of *The Student World* if justice were to be done to it; and one who cowered in a corner as democracy, clothed in parliamentary procedure, was put through its paces, is barely a reliable reporter! A grateful and affectionate farewell was said to Ruth Wick as she left the Executive Secretaryship to go to her new job at Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston; and an equally warm welcome was given to Herluf Jensen as he took up the demanding responsibilities Ruth was leaving.

Parishfield

From Oxford, Ohio, where the Assembly was held, my way led first north-west to Parishfield, near Brighton, Michigan, where for two weeks I was able to work quietly, and to get to know a little of the work of this remarkable community of three families which is developing a lay training centre. Its influence is already beginning to reach into the life of the church and the community in a number of parts of the country. Philip Potter and I, though largely dispensed from the daily physical work which is part of the community's discipline, and in which all visitors share, none the less on at least one occasion learned the dignity of toil with broom and bucket and mop! We were shown a grove of young trees which had been planted by businessmen in shirt sleeves, and were told that we were standing on ground already trodden by a good number of bishops as we bent over the sinks in the community's common kitchen. A group of young people came for Bible study on our last weekend.

As September drew to a close the time for departure came, and one morning I was carried off from Parishfield by the first of the

kind people who, with Ruth Wick's and Herluf Jensen's master hand behind them, were to pass me on from one to another from Michigan to Ohio, and thence again, via Chicago, to Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas, and finally back to Missouri and Tennessee. I was able to visit students "at home", to talk to them in their student centres, their sorority houses, on picnics and in camps, and at football games! In Colombus, Ohio, I saw (and heard!) my first cheer leaders and my first marching band. With a patient instructor at my elbow, I learned to cheer only for the touchdowns of "our" team, and to distinguish the finer points of strategy in what looked at first like a mass wrestling match between two heavily armoured opposing armies!

Negro students

Of the many impressions of the following months I must mention only one. About this time, Collier's Magazine published two excellent articles by Alan Paton on the changing place of the negroes in American life; and subsequently, in Nashville, Tennessee, Hiel and Edith Bollinger gave me a great deal of information gained during their own long association with the negro people. In Arkansas and Oklahoma, through the visits I made for the regional Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., I not only came in contact with negro students (since I had met a number of them before), but more particularly I came face to face with their problems. I took part in two mixed camps organized by the regional "Y" and visited Philander Smith College in Little Rock, and the A.M. and N. College in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. I wished very much I had had time and opportunity to visit others. In Pine Bluff I heard the magnificent choir sing, and spent the day talking to individuals and little groups in the sitting room of the splendid student union building. I learned that no small piece of knowledge is ever useless to a Federation secretary, when I was called upon to give the regular lecture to the humanities class — on medieval cathedrals in Europe! With two men students who came to see me I had one of the best political discussions I had taken part in anywhere in the United States. And for the first time I became aware of what a colour barrier is: I ate without embarrassment in a cafe in the town with two Indian members of the college staff; but when the negro dean of the college and a negro girl student drove me to the railway station, we had to go on to the platform through separate doors. And I travelled back to Little Rock in a "white" carriage. The next day I spoke to a gracious white Christian who was interested to hear me tell

of my visit, said that she knew and loved the negro people, but would not of course invite them to her home.

Anything one tries to write of one's personal feelings in this situation sounds either platitudinous, or unsympathetic with one or the other side. It was all more tragic, and more complicated, than I had previously imagined. At the time of my visit, the Supreme Court decision was but a few months old, and hope was in the air. We should be grateful for the sustained fight which has been, and is being, put up by Christian individuals and groups, and at the same time realize that in many places Christian faith is by no means to be identified with non-discrimination. The Church still has its own house to put in order.

Journey's end

In Texas both countryside and people put me so much in mind of my own home that I was tempted to continue straight on across the Pacific! I spoke in Austin to several hundreds of students from all but one of the campus denominational and interdenominational groups at a Sunday afternoon ecumenical service, and was introduced to the Christian Faith and Life Community, a remarkable experiment in Christian community living and lay training which has been launched by the Rev. Jack Lewis¹.

From the heat and sunshine of Austin I turned east again, and came through Missouri to the autumn glories of Nashville and the warm hospitality of Hiel and Edith Bollinger and the Methodist Student Movement. From there, after a week of fellowship with Methodist student workers from all over the country, I flew back to New York, seeing, to my boundless delight, the floodlit dome of the Capitol in Washington as our plane stopped on the way.

As, on the day before my departure, I was walking alone up Fifth Avenue, hatless and without an umbrella in the rain, I suddenly noticed that the drops had ceased to fall on me, and glancing round, found a little old man with a stubbly beard who was holding his umbrella over my head. We walked along together for a block or two, and finally, as he had to turn off and I had only a step or two further to go, he bowed and left me, saying cheerfully, "Sorry to lose you!" It was an "unnecessary" act of kindness in a big, impersonal city; yet, at the time, it barely surprised me. It was very American.

¹ An article on this Community will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Federation News Sheet*.

BOOK REVIEWS

STUDIES IN LITERATURE AND BELIEF, by Martin Jarrett-Kerr.
Rockliff Publishing Corp., London, 15s., and Harper & Bros.,
New York, \$2.75.

"The major problem which faces the creative writer in the twentieth century is the erosion of the imaginative soil." And, it is this fact which makes Father Jarrett-Kerr's recent book, *Studies in Literature and Belief*, a rather important study.

The modern artist who wishes to make an affirmation of faith can no longer depend on an ontological framework within which he can anticipate responses to his language, imagery and ideas. He is trapped in a world of disbelief and relativity, and his faith is so exceptional that he either hurls forth his declarations in a defiant manner or pleads his cause in self-righteous defence. However he affirms his faith, he is still a strange being.

I know of few subjects which are so pitted with traps for the unwary in theology and literature, and which have been so confused with wishful piety passing for literary criticism. Firstly, good belief does not make good literature, and agnosticism does not result in a flexibility of mind requisite for creativity. Secondly, the scholar must distinguish between the specific faith of the writer and the general beliefs of a certain period. A sceptic in Christendom would still employ language and imagery which implied many assumptions of his time. Thirdly, what does one mean by belief? I can foresee psychologist, scientist, anthropologist and theologian being most unChristian to each other in answering this question. Father Jarrett-Kerr says, "It is rarely if ever the 'propositional' thing that some like to make out, though it may and must sometimes express itself in propositional forms. It is related so closely to thought on one side and to feeling and consequent action on the other..." Fourthly, how does one assess belief? Here, some are so naive as to judge a writer's beliefs from his explicit statements rather than the total direction of his writings. Each one of these pitfalls Jarrett-Kerr foresees and handles in a competent fashion, except that I shall later return to his definition of belief.

Another difficulty which arises in dealing with the relationship of belief and literature is the infinite number of relationships which can exist. Wary of "barren aesthetic theories", Jarrett-Kerr adopts

an historical approach in the belief that this will do more justice to his historical and artistic reality, this in turn being best revealed in the titles of his chapters: "The Ballad and Society, or the Assimilation of Belief", "Calderon and the Imperialism of Belief", "Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*, or the Quiescence of Belief", "Dostoevski and the Agony of Belief", and "C. F. Ramuz, or the Analogy of Belief".

There are two types of assimilation. Firstly, there is the immediate assimilation of the new belief to existing forms (as with Hinduism in India), and, secondly, there is the form of assimilation which involves initial antagonism to the old beliefs accompanied by a stern puritanism, and then by a gradual assimilation of the old forms and traditions to the new beliefs. Jarrett-Kerr studies the English and Scottish ballads of medieval England, concluding that their medieval *schema* absorbs with ease the pagan themes, and that these ballads have more depth and effectiveness and greater emotional maturity than the early pagan ballads. The very use of the pagan theme is an indication of the strength of the Christian tradition at that time.

In the next chapter, the author analyzes the major plays of Calderon, the Spanish dramatist. Here was a Jesuit who felt almost a compulsive need to justify the writing of his religious plays, this need resulting in a conscious tendency to make the plays conform to religious teachings. Though his romantic imagination and intellectual discipline were great, this was insufficient to overcome the dramatic effects of a belief that this earthly life is a dream and that only the heavenly life is true. The effects of this theological certainty and this view of creation are weak endings in each of his plays, for if life is a dream and death a victory, for what is there to fight here? It is doubtful if any writer with such views concerning creation could write tragedies involving human beings.

In the chapter on Manzoni, we see a famous Italian novelist who believed in the eternal verity of his Catholic faith. There is no sense of imposition, no agony of belief, no parading of belief in an aggressive manner. In the novel, *I Promessi Sposi*, Manzoni with his great powers of description traces the attempts of ill-fated lovers to marry. The description of the social conditions of the times, of the Church in the midst of tyranny, of the conversion of the "unnamed" are handled in a competent and skilful manner. Manzoni, in his calm acceptance of faith, is, according to Jarrett-Kerr, the last of the Christian humanists.

The chapter on Dostoevski is an ill-fated attempt to present this novelist struggling with the question of faith and God's existence.

This chapter is inadequate in that Jarrett-Kerr seems so preoccupied with a literary criticism of Dostoevski that he loses sight of the vital relation which he is analyzing. Firstly, he tries to see Dostoevski as a novelist, and very competently reveals the novelist's lightness of touch, his skill in handling relationships and in conveying character through event. Secondly, he summarizes an article by the critic, D. A. Traversi, who observed that Dostoevski tried to transcend sensible experience without having first extracted its full value, thus tending to a purely abstract universality. For example, in *The Brothers Karamazov* there is a failure to bring the broken world of good and evil together. Thirdly, Jarrett-Kerr describes Dostoevski's handling of nature as a therapeutic background to the mood of his characters, and as an underworld which symbolizes the evil in man. All was done with penetrating insight, but I was never quite sure whether the author was trying to prove that, though a writer be in agony concerning his beliefs, this does not presuppose lack of control and skill, or whether he was trying to make some other point concerning the relation of literature and belief.

The chapter on Ramuz introduces English readers to a little-known Swiss writer. He possessed "earthly gifts" with a rare metaphysical imagination, and he used simple themes in his tales, always mindful of the tale as an analogy bearing witness to some moral or religious truth.

The last chapter describes the difficulties of the modern writer. Confronted by the inroads of psychology either in literary criticism or in the medical dossiers, and by a world which has little faith in anything, the modern writer reacts by intimidation, like George Bernanos; or with rhetoric which hypnotizes criticism into silence, as Paul Claudel; or in self-defence, as Graham Greene. Or the writer's doctrine intrudes itself into his literary work; for example, the prominence of the death scene in such Catholic writers as Roger Martin du Gard and Evelyn Waugh. Each of these modern writers is so concerned to prove his point that he has often forgotten the need of full-blooded doubt.

Other modern writers have escaped into comparative theology. They have consciously taken the traditional archetypal patterns in poetry such as (1) Heaven-Hell in Virgil and Dante, or (2) Eternity as in Woolf's *Orlando*, or (3) Devil, Hero, God as in *Paradise Lost*, and have attempted to incorporate these patterns into their work, expecting a response. In the words of Jarrett-Kerr, "If he confines himself to myths that have never been believed to be historically true, he is on safe ground; but the imaginative erosion has washed away so many of such myths from the region of res-

ponsiveness. If, on the other hand, he tries to supplement them by borrowing from myths that have been believed (and are still by many believed) to be true, his very use of them as 'merely' myths has in fact the effect of dissolving them, so that they do not even do their work as myths." And, thus, the writer is eventually faced with the necessity of a personal decision as to whether this is a myth or a historical fact.

Jarret-Kerr ends the book on a note of hope, stating that the writer who makes an affirmation of faith need not be a pilgrim traveling to a predestined end, but can be an explorer in probing into the conduct of people.

This book is sufficiently important to demand the above summary and a fairly critical analysis. As much as I enjoyed it and would highly recommend it to others, I have concluded that it fails to be the masterpiece it could have been.

The reasons are numerous. Firstly, Father Jarrett-Kerr has taken such a large subject to study that he can only briefly indicate the broad outlines. This he does admirably, and whatever inadequacies arise from lack of space are not his fault. Secondly, I have the impression that the author has a horror of "aesthetic theories", and thinks that the literary critic should stick fairly close to the literary works and avoid speculation. With this, I can agree and sympathize. Yet, I do think that this has resulted in undue caution in discussing this subject. The very choice of the five types of relations implies some criterion and theoretical analysis, and speculation and theorizing from the facts is within limits justifiable. It was this failure to push analysis further at the end of each chapter which I found most disconcerting. At times, such as in the chapter on Calderon, he merely hints at the relevance of the doctrine of creation to tragedy; and in the chapter on Dostoevski, where he discusses Traversi's views, he appears to be so close to some possible and relevant theological explanations for this separation between good and evil, the sensible and the universal, but he lets slip the chance. As much as I realize the dangers of speculation here, still there could have been sharper and more profound analysis.

However, I think that these two reasons are not sufficient explanations, and that we must probe deeper into definition and methodology. Admitting the essential validity of Jarrett-Kerr's definition of belief, still when one begins to analyse the relation of a specific writer's belief to his works, the system to which he subscribes is fairly important. It is significant whether one is a Spanish Jesuit priest of the seventeenth century or a Russian Orthodox of the nineteenth century. I quite realize that at times one cannot say

for certain that the religious belief is the most important factor, or merely one of a number of factors, which determine the nature of his works, but at times one can speak with a degree of certainty. Calderon and Dostoevski are, perhaps, two writers who permit such an approach ; and I would suggest that the question of the structure of Calderon's plays and the dichotomy in Dostoevski's writings have very definite theological underpinnings.

In an analysis of this type, I do think that a more definite formulation of the propositional form of a writer's belief, as well as its relation to the total work, is required. This omission is the basic reason for Jarrett-Kerr's failure to analyse more sharply this relationship. As long as the propositional form of belief is minimized, one can avoid this deeper analysis ; but if so, then is one truly studying the relation between literature and belief ?

In conclusion, I would highly recommend this book to theologian, artist and student, for I regard it as an excellent attempt to deal with an extremely difficult subject. The book will be found by all to be highly interesting and provocative.

W. SCOTT ELLIS.

THE FACE OF MY PARISH, by Tom Allan. S.C.M. Press, London. 124 pp. 7s. 6d.

Using the example of a city congregation of ten thousand people in Glasgow, the author describes the whole dilemma of the Church : she has become bourgeois — and therefore fails to touch the working classes ; she is busy with church-going people — and therefore has no time for the indifferent ones. She preaches — but no one translates the word into everyday action. The picture painted by Tom Allan would be hopeless, if he were not at the same time convinced that this picture of the Church, of which we complain so often today in all the countries of Europe, does not correspond with the Church of Christ as it truly is. That is what is so pleasant in his book : he does not complain, but shows quite practically what is to be done in the paralysed and lifeless city congregation.

Two kinds of work are important for Tom Allan : evangelism among non-Christian people and spiritual help and leadership for those laymen who belong to the "church in the Church", for those who work together in it. These activities belong together ; they are related to each other like the two foci of an ellipse. You cannot carry on evangelism on the periphery without working for a renewal at the centre of the congregation. All activity within the congregation

must lead towards evangelism. There is no priority in time. You must begin *today*. Tom Allan takes seriously the priesthood of all believers. The pastor keeps the leadership, but laymen undertake the work. So he shows what is still possible today in an introverted city congregation of two hundred families, if only you have confidence in the Spirit of God, who is no monopoly of the pastors, and go to work yourself.

The author underlines the fact that the gap between the preaching of the Word and secularized people must be bridged *in* the church congregation, and *by* the congregation itself. He knows how dull traditional parishes are, and how incapable they are of doing such a job. But he sees the revolution and the renewal of the parish as emerging precisely from this task. Is this true? Perhaps in the case of Tom Allan's North Kelvinside parish in Glasgow. There are parishes which — as he, too, knows — have so far lapsed into Christian secularism that we should really leave God free to build up His own congregation elsewhere. It will then become evident where the "para-church" is. Under Hitler, the confessing church, meeting in rooms and stables, joyfully maintained that they were *the* church and that the "para-church" was in the churches. If it is really the task of Christians in the world today "to be — not to act", we must reckon with the fact that *somewhere* in this world a living congregation comes into existence. Let us beware of despising it!

At the end you have the impression that this book can encourage every pastor and every church member to work joyfully in his parish and with his parish among the "worldly". We cannot yet foresee where this development will lead us. But the main thing is that we believe that one day there will be a Church which exists for the world, and waits with it for the coming of the Lord.

HORST SYMANOWSKI.

SCIENCE AND THE HUMAN IMAGINATION : ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY AND LOGIC OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE, by Mary B. Hesse. S.C.M. Press, London. 171 pp. 12s.6d.

This is a cogent and perceptive little volume which argues a position which is increasingly popular in dealing with the relationship between science and religion. Briefly stated, this is the position which holds that science and religion both approach the same world by essentially similar methods. It differs from attempts (like those of

Descartes and Francis Bacon) to assign science and religion different aspects of reality, as well as from attempts (like that of Kant) to regard science and religion as different approaches to the same reality.

The first four chapters of this volume are devoted to a history of scientific development. They point to how the very nature of scientific knowledge has changed with transformations in the cultural situation. Thus, as the Greek view of a statically perfect reality gave way to a Christian or biblical view of a created purposive universe, medieval science (in which logic contemplated first causes) gave way to modern science with its empirical study of contingent details. Modern science in turn produced a mechanistic and rationalistic world-view, that perverted its own unique contributions and forced the Cartesian dualism which this book, following Alfred North Whitehead, vigorously protests. Developments within physics itself have brought the whole mechanistic "billiard-ball universe" to question, and have laid the ground work for the kind of unity between science and religion for which this book argues.

The remaining five chapters argue the main thesis in light of discussions currently taking place among the philosophers of sciences. Holding, as the author does, the view that scientific theories are analogies to reality, she is able at once to reject both the naive realist view that scientific theories describe actual entities, and the operationalist and positivist views that such theories have little or no relationship to reality, being merely constructs of the mind which facilitate discussion. The reader is lead to believe that theology also proceeds by the method of analogy.

It is a sign of our times that a book of this character should be written by a lecturer in mathematics and be published by a religious press. It constitutes further evidence that at the cutting edge of both science and religion there is the possibility of a creative interchange of ideas and insights. This reviewer, however, is uneasy lest all distinctions in method between science and theology be blurred by this kind of an approach, and wishes that more attention to the distinctions between science and religion could have been made in this volume. Such distinctions can be so stated as actually to strengthen the cooperation between these disciplines, rather than to postulate a dualism between them.

EDWARD LEROY LONG, Jr.

LOVE, POWER, JUSTICE, by Paul Tillich. Oxford University Press, \$2.50.

Paul Tillich, professor of systematic theology in Union Theological Seminary, New York, in this little book gives us a characteristic example of his philosophical method. It is a good introduction to his systematic theology. Tillich's writing is never easy, although always stimulating and, to this reviewer, always both illuminating and luminous. This is because he compresses into sentences and paragraphs and even words the gist of whole arguments and positions. Santayana, in a posthumous fragment recently published in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, says that the terms of his own system do not define their object (reality) but only "indicate" it. Terms are but words or images which for intelligence become signs for something beneath or beyond them, of which they manifest the presence, power and method of action. Nothing existent can be defined. The object is always transcendent. Tillich makes the same point. Being in itself is indefinable. And ontology is thus the discipline which attempts to describe reality at the deepest level. It is the foundation of metaphysics. It seeks to analyse encountered reality, trying to find the structural elements "which enable a being to participate in being".

Tillich begins his book by describing his own ontological method and the importance of an ontological analysis of the three concepts. Love, power and justice are so mishandled in daily speech and in intellectual disciplines that their proper description is of the utmost importance. "Without ontological foundation neither love nor power nor justice can be adequately interpreted." The first part of this book demonstrates that love, power and justice are essential characteristics of reality, are constitutive of everything that is, and are therefore universal. This is true of each concept in itself and also of their inter-connectedness and of their unity. The second half of the book applies the results of the ontological analysis of the three concepts and their unity to ethical problems arising in personal and group relations, and in relation to the ultimate, to the problem of justice in personal relations and the problem of power in group relations. "One cannot discuss the ontological functions of love, power and justice without presupposing their ethical functions, and one cannot discuss their ethical functions without constantly referring to their ontological foundations."

What can one say? Tillich himself, like Santayana, states that the only test of the adequacy of any ontological analysis is its ability to make reality understandable. Ontology asks questions of being,

"that is, of something that is present to everybody at every moment", and something that is indefinable because presupposed in every definition. "The only answer, but a sufficient answer to the question of ontological verification is the appeal to intelligent recognition." Certainly this book evokes intelligent recognition on page after page. His treatment, in the second part, of *eros* and *agape*, of levels of justice, of compulsion and the power of being, of pacifism and of the problem of a world community are outstanding illustrations of his ability to make reality understandable. His handling of basic ethical problems in contemporary terms, his power to express theological insights in non-theological language, is always refreshing.

The weakness of these lectures — originally delivered in Nottingham, England, and Richmond, U.S.A. — arises out of their very compactness. Of course, any attempt to describe reality in itself is bound to appear tautological. But the reader is left questioning basic assumptions, on the one hand, and wondering just what has been added, on the other. In addition there are inevitable gaps where much has been left unsaid. For example, on the question of the human individual as a centre of being. Is it that being is one, or beings are one, or beings participate in one? Again, the statement that "one cannot deny that being is one... in so far as it *is*... and in the manifoldness of its texture", is not so obvious as it is made out to be.

However, whether one agrees or disagrees with the author, this book can be highly recommended as an introduction to one of the most stimulating of modern thinkers. It is impossible to summarize without being misleading. His contention, briefly, is that the actual and factual basis of all life is the striving for re-union, or love (being is one). Justice is the form in which the power of being actualizes itself. Injustice and separation are false forms of being, and hence are eventually self-destructive. Power which loses the form of justice and the substance of love destroys itself.

In the final chapter Tillich's thesis is expressed in theological language. Life is described "as separation and reunion, or as love". "In His Son, God separates Himself from Himself, and in the Spirit He reunites Himself with Himself." "God is not dead identity but the living ground of everything that has life." "Essentially, in their created nature, love, power and justice are united. In existence they are separated. How can their essential unity be re-established? Through the manifestation of the ground in which they are united." "Love, power and justice are one in the divine ground, they shall become one in human existence. The holy in which they are united shall become holy reality in time and space." How? "By the power

of being-itself." "The power of God is that He overcomes estrangement, not that he prevents it ; that He takes it, symbolically speaking, upon Himself." "Only God can forgive, because in Him alone love and justice are completely united."

ROBERT TILLMAN.

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